

Edleen Vaughan

Carmen Sylva

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EDLEEN VAUGHAN

OR

PATHS OF PERIL

BY

CARMEN SYLVA

(HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN OF ROUMANIA)

AUTHOR OF "THE WITCH'S CITADEL," "ASTRA," "LEGENDS OF THE
CARPATHIANS," "OUT OF TWO WORLDS," "THOUGHTS OF
A QUEEN," ETC., ETC.

Eliza - queen of Roumania

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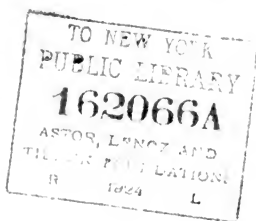
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OF NEW YORK
EDLEEN VAUGHAN.

CHAPTER I.

THE PRODIGAL SON.

"Two and three are five, and four are nine, and six are fifteen, and two are seventeen. Well, I must edge it in here. But how? under what head? Material for frocks? But then, if they don't wear the frocks? To poor people? Ah, yes; poor people. Hitherto I always put them down by their names. Still, it will do. To poor people. After all, it is for a poor, poor boy, my——! Is such a deception reprehensible? Harry has forbidden my giving him any more money. *To poor people.* I tremble like a thief as I write it."

These words fell in a whisper from the painfully compressed lips of a most beautiful woman, as she sat in the keen, pale glare of a lamp, whose green shade kept all the rest of the room in darkness.

The flickering firelight made the big shadows, thrown by numerous pieces of comfortable furniture, flit to and fro like specters. On the hearthrug lay a doll, in prettily embroidered clothes, with real hair and white teeth, and with its eyes shut, as though it were dazzled by the red glow in the grate.

An angry sound of rushing and thundering waves proclaimed the vicinity of the sea, and from time to time a gust of wind shook the lofty bow-windows, the shutters, the tiles

on the roof, the moaning trees and shivering creepers, which latter were tossed against walls and windows and left many a leaf in their fissures.

"Two and six are eight, and four are twelve," whispered the lady, as her slender hand, costly with rings, slowly drew her pen along a column of figures in a book of household accounts, whose reflection made her face look very white, the shadows under her lashes very dark, and her sensitive, painfully contracted eyebrows very delicate indeed. Her hair lay in wavy brown bands above her forehead and rippled down on her white dressing-gown from a loose knot at her neck. Her fingers were so soft that the penholder left a deep mark upon them, and when she presently lifted her hand to her cheek, the touch remained visible there for an instant, as though her delicate flesh lacked elasticity. Her hands were extremely beautiful, with taper fingers and transparent nails. Her nose and brow formed a classic line. Her nostrils were long and almond-shaped, and vibrated with every thought. A very slight line appeared between her brows, as her eyes returned to the account-book, and the contraction of her lips caused other lines to gather about the corners of her mouth, suddenly making her face look much older.

"Five and seven are—five seven are——" The figures seemed to grow refractory. She passed her hand across her brow, the Indian diamond on her third finger flashing as she moved. Then she bent toward the lamp to screw the flame a little higher, and the light fell upon a pair of lovely dark-gray eyes, that could vie in brilliancy and varying hue with the stone called "cat's-eye," and did vie with it, too, for her gown was fastened at the throat with a single stone of that kind set in tiny diamonds. Her neck looked very fair and youthful, as it bent gracefully forward from

among the white lace folds of her collar. She must be a fascinating woman with those shining eyes of hers and that soft feminine attitude !

“ Five and seven——” she repeated, and her eyes strayed into empty space, with the black obscurity of the lamp-shade upon them, while the light beneath it still fell full upon her mouth and chin ; that chin, delicate and round as a child’s, completed the exquisite outline of her face.

Just then, a log in the grate burst into flame, and cast so warm a radiance upon the doll that it looked like a living child. The light flickered across the inlaid floor, and played in bright reflections among the lovely woman’s curls. A clock struck midnight, in deep, seemingly far-off tones. The storm grew fiercer, and shook the three great semicircular windows looking upon the flower garden ; a palm fell to the ground, and tossed its long, feathery leaves against the panes ; in the faint light of the fire they looked like a human form. The beautiful woman started and turned her head, raising her hand between her eyes and the lamp, and trying to pierce the darkness. Then she fancied she heard, amid all the uproar, a tap on the window-pane. An instant after the sash was thrown up, and a young man of eighteen or nineteen sprang into the room noiselessly and lithely as a panther.

“ Mother ! Oh, you are still here, mother ? And busy with your accounts ! Good mother, darling, core of my heart, my little mother ! For my sake she sits up at night poring over accounts to avoid getting scolded about her incorrigible madcap. My darling ! ”

While speaking, the young man closed the window with a quick jerk, darted to the lady’s side, embraced her impetuously, laid his cheek against hers and pressed his lips upon her hair, and then he knelt at her feet, kissing her hands and

the tips of her fingers by turns, and finally burying his curly black head in the laces on her lap. For a moment, her delicate hand strayed among those silken locks, and a faint, infinitely tender smile parted her lips. But presently her face grew grave and pale again.

"Tom, what have you been about?"

"I, mother?" The most innocent child could not have uttered those words more gently, tenderly, reproachfully. As he spoke, he raised his head and looked up at his mother, but his eyes fell before her look. His features greatly resembled hers, except that his eyes were green, his lashes and eyebrows black, and that the soft, dark down on his upper lip gave his mouth a defiant expression; then, too, his lips were fuller and more sensual than his mother's, and his nostrils quivered with love of pleasure and insolence. His head, small and round, with a rather low forehead, strongly protuberant above the brows, had something of an antique shape. His hands and feet seemed too small for manly beauty, and the feline suppleness of his body conveyed an impression of continual restlessness. Fain to escape his mother's questioning gaze, he jumped up, dropped on his knees before the chimney, poked the fire, seized the doll, and threw it into the blaze. His mother sprang to her feet and tried to save the costly toy, but she was too late.

"O Tom!" she cried reproachfully, laying her hand on his shoulder.

"I hate dolls!" he rejoined, between his set teeth. "Look how it burns!"

He watched the work of destruction with the greedy relish of a beast of prey.

"But, Minnie, Tom! what am I to do with Minnie? She'll cry her little heart out."

"Buy her another, or break her off playing with dolls. I

can't bear the sight of them, and I detest the little girls always chattering about their children. I've sworn destruction to every doll I fall in with."

"A useful occupation," said his mother bitterly.

They stared into the flames, a regular bonfire, which seemed bent on outroaring the storm and the surf.

"There are plenty of dolls left between Anglesea and Cardigan, and plenty more in London; and you know that your step-father likes to buy his daughters dolls, and is particularly fond of seeing them play with them."

"Yes, yes, I know," said the young man, his lips curling with scorn and impatience. "But there were no dolls for *me*—only canes; and his eyes flashed with hatred whenever I dared to stir, except when he saw me on horseback; he always hoped I should end by breaking my neck!" The young man laughed softly to himself. His laugh and voice were exceedingly low and melodious. His teeth flashed and glittered in his dark face.

"But, Tom, you always do what is most calculated to vex him, you know."

"Nay; is it not enough that I am an Irishman? Doesn't that vex him beyond everything?" The young man thrust the poker into the fire again, and jumped up.

"I am Irish too, Tom, and he loves me."

"And yet he said: 'You're Irish tramps, you and your mother! There's no depending on either of you. You're not to be trusted.'"

"Are you quite sure he said that, Tom?"

"Something like it, then. You know, I have a bad memory. But I never forget a blow; I never forget when I owe retribution."

"'And I always forget to be grateful,' you should have added, Tom."

"Am I not grateful to my sweet mother?" asked the young man, stealing his arm around her slender form and laying his head on her shoulder. "I thanked you on my knees even when you whipped me; don't you remember, mother? I could not bear to see you cry about my falsehoods; I no longer felt the lashes; I saw nothing but your tears; thought of nothing but the sobs which shook your frame. I forgot all but you. And in those days we were alone in the world—we two, mother dear——"

"Ay, Tom, and so poor—so bitterly poor!"

"And even now I submit to any punishment from you, mother; but not from him. You are *mine*; I love you so madly that I hate him and my little step-sisters and the fine house and the park and everything—everything that your eyes look upon. Mother, I have nothing but you! Mother, I love you dearly—dearly!"

"What thorn are you hiding among roses now? You always flatter when you mean to pain; I am afraid of your tenderness."

The young man hastily released her from his embrace, and turned to listen as the clock struck midnight.

"That's *his* teaching!" he muttered between his teeth.

"No, it is yours; my experience dates from your early childhood."

"Would the money had thorns, mother, and stuck to my pockets!"

"It has thorns for me, Tom; such thorns! I am to give you what is not mine to give, and to stand up and answer for your follies. The thorns in that money make my heart and fingers bleed."

With a disconsolate movement she sank into a low chair by the chimney, clasped her arms round her knees, and fixed her eyes upon the fire.

He slid down at her feet like a serpent, and nestled quickly in the long cashmere train of her gown.

"I wish I could lie like this all night," he murmured.

"That is not true," she answered involuntarily, in a faint, dreamy voice.

A hot flush rose to his face, as she looked down at him with her large eyes. He sat up and took her feet upon his knees.

"How cold they are," he said, and pulling off her shoes, he chafed them gently. "Nobody knows how to nurse my sweet mother! Nobody spoils her! Nobody lightens her burdens!"

"Nay, Tom, my Cousin Kathleen takes all she can upon her young shoulders."

"But Kathleen has no shoulders, she is all eyes!" cried Tom, laughing.

"Yes, she has beautiful eyes. I hope you do not look into them too often."

"I am never here, you know." The dark, hot flush again suffused his face; he bent down and kissed his mother's feet.

The sea thundered like the report of a cannon, and the storm swept like the breathings of absorbing passion, in fitful gusts and heavy sighs around the house.

"This contains my mother's magic wand," said Tom, laying his hand on her pocket, "and when one knows the charm, the wand discloses hidden treasures."

"Have we got to the point at last?" said the lady, glancing up at the clock. "You have wasted three-quarters of an hour upon me. A pity to lose so much time."

"No loss to me, unless it be because the storm is growing worse and worse."

"Then stay here overnight. Your room is empty."

"No, I should die if I were locked up here. No, mother, it cannot be. But I should stay three hours longer with you if it were not for the storm."

"And if you could not get the money you want sooner."

"Mother, I *must* have it. You don't know what would happen if I didn't get it."

"Well, what would happen?"

"Something that has never entered your thoughts; for you don't know the world a bit, my little mother."

"And my wise son knows it thoroughly!"

"Yes, mother, for I am an orphan. An orphaned child gets to know the world very early. Mother, give me some money! Mother, you know you will in the end, however long you hold out first; and if, in the mean time, your husband notices that you aren't yet asleep and finds us here, it will be an evil hour for both of us."

He slipped her shoes on her feet again.

"Come, mother! not very much. Five or six pounds. That's not the world. Come, mother dear!"

He put his hand in her pocket, drew out the keys, sprang nimbly to his feet and hurried to her desk.

"You steal!" she whispered, close to his ear.

He started back. "Then give it to me. I am only begging, not stealing."

Begging with violence, like a highwayman."

"Mother, I *must* have it."

As she reluctantly unlocked a cash-box he thrust his hand into it. Then he flung his arms round her neck and fled through the window, out into the stormy night.

She stood as motionless as a statue—mute and deadly white. After a while, she began to count the money with trembling hands.

Was it the storm or the noise of the falling window-sash?

Several of the inhabitants awoke at the same instant.

"Kathleen, Kathleen!" cried a frightened, childish voice in the upper story. Two little hands grasped the bed-rail, and the light of the night-lamp fell upon a cherubic baby face with waves of fair hair, big, wide-open eyes and a tiny plaintive mouth.

"Kathleen!" the voice repeated.

Then a rosy little face emerged from a second bed, and another soft voice said sensibly :

"Go to sleep, Minnie! the night isn't yet over. Don't tease Kathleen."

"Didn't you hear something, Winnie?" asked the little one.

"No; nothing but the wind and the sea, and they sing :

"Sleep, little children!
The fir tree shall rock ye,
So true and so strong;
The ocean shall sing ye
A lullaby song."

The child sang under her breath, and her younger sister joining in with silvery accents, they lulled themselves to sleep again.

Meanwhile Kathleen, the young governess Minnie had vainly called upon, had slipped barefoot into the adjacent room, and pressed her face against the window-pane. She had heard the sliding of the sash below, and the lamplight, shining out upon the terrace, showed her a dark figure quickly retreating in the direction of the turbulent river. The girl at the window shivered and strained her eyes to pierce the darkness. But the night had swallowed up that shadowy form, and she saw only prostrate plants, which seemed to stretch out despairing arms for aid. She held her breath and listened. The storm drowned the singing baby voices, but she heard a door close and a firm step pass along the

passage and down the stairs. A faint streak of light shot through a chink in the door and slid across her naked little feet. She bent forward and listened intently for any sound of voices from below, but all was silent. She shivered anew and stole back at last to her bed in the children's room. Once she raised her head to see whether they were asleep; and then she lay motionless, with wide-open eyes, through all that stormy night.

The man whose steps Kathleen had heard on the stairs was tall and broad-shouldered, with a high forehead, still profuse fair hair, soft whiskers, and a close-shaved face. His firm chin and jaws, his thin, straight lips, betokened a powerful mind and strong will. His nose was short, but well-cut. His fair, bushy brows shaded brilliant blue eyes that had a piercing, far-sighted look in them, as though they scanned a boundless distance. Those beacon-like eyes enhanced the rocky strength of his face; and yet it was a good face, too—full of manly, active kindness—a face to which one would turn if one were in distress, though one might shrink from it if conscious of guilt: the face of a man whom thousands obeyed, after he had raised himself by his own efforts from penury and want.

Such was Harry Vaughan, the master of the house, as he suddenly appeared at the drawing-room door and said in his deep bass voice:

“Edleen! what are you doing here so late?”

With a feeling of deadly chillness at her heart she turned to face him, and her fine features betrayed such nameless terror that he placed his candle on the nearest chair, and hurried toward her.

“Edleen! What ails you?”

“Oh, nothing. Next to nothing. No misfortune—only—only—a slight vexation.”

The gentleman glanced at the account-books, and the open cash-box, on the desk.

"Has Tom been here?" he asked, endeavoring to keep his lips and voice from growing stern.

His wife trembled in spite of his gentleness.

"He is killing me, Harry."

"Why does he come at night now?"

"It was the first time, Harry; I don't know whence he came or whither he went in the storm."

"And you have again given him money?"

"Forgive me, Harry!"

"It is not on account of the money; you know you are welcome to satisfy any whim you may have. It is on his own account. I had begged you so earnestly not to give him any more."

"But if I don't, there is no knowing——" She stopped abruptly.

Vaughan compressed his lips, as if he feared their uttering an untimely word. He cursed the prodigal who was poisoning the life of the wife he adored, but he refrained from bitter speech because Tom was not his son.

Edleen keenly felt the disgrace of her position. She shuddered with shame as her eyes fell on the words *To poor people*, which she had so cleverly inserted that evening; and now she did not even know as yet how much those slender fingers had snatched from her box.

"If you would but trust me fully, Edleen," her husband began, after a pause. "I do not deserve such utter disregard of my advice. I know the world, and the life the boy is leading, better than you do. Your weakness renders him more wretched every day, and your shielding him against me does not make your sorrow lighter. I am deeply grieved to see you afraid of me."

"No, not afraid, but ashamed!" she murmured.

A great pain passed through the strong man's breast and quivered about his brows and lips. She longed to fling herself at his feet, to clasp his knees and confess everything to him. But suppose he forbade her seeing her son again? His sense of right and wrong was unflinching. He would despise her, and that she could not bear.

Thus they stood in agonizing silence, and as the clock struck again, its deep tones seemed to warn them that heavy fates were deciding at that hour, when ill-timed secrecy yawned like a gulf between them. Nay, the clock had said or noticed nothing, but ticked on peacefully; and the sea and the tempest raged as before—raged as though heroes and martyrs, young men and criminals, that the waves had swept away in the course of centuries, were struggling to regain the shore.

"Oh, that I were dead!" thought Edleen.

"How am I to protect my wife?" mused Vaughan. "Perhaps it is better for her—perhaps it is a kind of check upon her—if she is afraid of me; and so I will bear it patiently for her good."

He was so accustomed to take heavy burdens for himself and others upon his shoulders, that he never thought of complaining or rebelling.

"Close your books, and telegraph to Lewes for money. Don't distress yourself about what cannot be helped now. Come and try to rest."

She followed him with bowed head and weary steps as he carried the lamp up to their bedroom. But they found little rest that night. No one really slept, except those two innocent little angels, whose souls had hardly left the gates of heaven yet on their road to the vale of tears below.

CHAPTER II.

THE OLD STORY.

To sound sleepers the night was quickly over now. The storm abated at last, and the sun rose majestically beyond the sea, his broad rays scattering the clouds and tinging the restless foam with ruddy light. Fields and woods burst into music, and the sound of numberless hammers arose from the neighboring mines.

As children always awake with the birds, little voices began to twitter in their tiny beds, softly at first, but ringing out clearly soon. Kathleen arose from her short morning slumber, and was greeted with shouts of joy. She looked charming in her white, daintily frilled night-gown, with her rosy, dimpled face; for she *had* dimples—one in either cheek, one in her chin, one just below her lip, one on the tip of her tiny nose; ay, and one at the nape of her neck, almost hidden by her short locks. The girl must have been ill and had her hair cut off; it was growing in soft tufts now at her temples and behind her pretty ears, and waving like delicate black plumage about her fine, straight forehead and her bold, imperious brows. The raven lashes cast mysterious shadows on her mild, bright, sea-blue eyes. If the sun did not lose his wits and begin to skip for joy as soon as ever he peeped into that room, it was only because he had so long been used to waking beautiful creatures.

By and by there came a knock at the door, and with a shout of "Papa, Papa!" the little ones sprang from their beds and rushed barefoot to the next room, into their father's arms, clinging to his neck, nestling in his lap and against his shoulders. And then began a discussion of in-

credibly important topics. Kathleen had not permitted Minnie to take the new doll to bed with her, for fear of crushing her fine clothes; so Winnie had made her a couch on the hearthrug to keep her warm overnight. But the storm had been bad, and poor dolly was sure to feel cold; and they couldn't go downstairs before they had had their baths, and what name should they give her, Edleen or Temorah, or simply Dolly; what did papa think? As they chatted in this way, a queer tread was heard on the stairs; it did not sound like a man's, nor yet like a dog's—a quadruped's, no doubt, but rather heavy; something trotted along the passage and snorted at the door, when the children gayly admitted and greeted Prinnie, a small Shetland pony, with a glossy black mane that fell over his eyes and nose, and all but swept the ground. The little fellow was hugged and kissed, and treated to bread and sugar, and then he walked round the room, sniffing at everything, but standing stock-still whenever the children approached him, as though he knew full well that his hoofs must not come into contact with their rosy toes.

Winnie was about nine years old; her chestnut hair fell in waves and ripples to her knees; her eyes were gray, like the sea before a storm, and so strangely large, grave, and brilliant, as if wonderful fancies were ever floating across their limpid depths. Minnie was but five, and looked like one of Fiesole's angels, with her clusters of pale, golden hair, her sweet smile, and beaming, azure eyes.

Their father lifted them both on Prinnie's shining black back, and they played with the pony's ears, tail, and mane as if it were a big dog. They looked like two little fairies as they rode about their airy, sunny room, showing Prinnie their toys and bursting into a ringing laugh, when he shook his head and peeped at them through his shaggy hair.

Meanwhile, Kathleen had retired to her bath with the intention of making great haste. But young girls are rarely quick about dressing.

"Had you better take a white, or a pink, or a light blue dress? and what ribbon to match it? or perhaps a flower? yes, a flower. And your dreadful hair won't get dry, and smooth, and tidy. It used to reach to your toes before it was cut; poor hair, you must pull its ends a little to make it grow faster. And you must peep into the glass to see whether you look exactly as you did yesterday, just like a boy."

In the front room nobody was in a hurry either, neither the father, whom the day's work would keep away for many hours, nor the children, who had a general objection to the restraint of clothes, nor yet the pony, who would be banished during lesson hours and was fond of playing upstairs.

"Prinnie, we've got a new doll!" whispered the younger girl at his right ear.

"And we're going to call her Dolly," added her sister at his left. "Prinnie, you might have brought her upstairs with you."

"Prinnie, you're awfully stupid."

"Ah, there's Kathleen already," said Winnie, with a look of annoyance.

"Maggie," little Minnie called to her old nurse, who was moving about the bath-room. "Maggie, the new doll is downstairs in the drawing-room. Please, Maggie, please!"

"You must get dressed before you have the doll," put in Kathleen, "else we shall never have done."

Vaughan rose.

"Come away, Prinnie," he said, and the pony followed him downstairs like a dog.

Stepping out on the terrace, he spoke with the gardener about the damage caused by the storm, when a light step

caught his ear, and his face brightened at the approach of his beautiful wife.

"You are tired," he said, gently putting his arm around her.

Just then the children came running into the drawing-room, but their gay voices suddenly fell and they appeared at the bow-window with sorely troubled faces.

"Dolly is gone!"

Edleen blushed deeply and then grew paler than before.

"Where's dolly?" asked Winnie, looking gravely into her mother's face.

Edleen's lips quivered a little, especially as she saw her husband and her young cousin's gaze fixed upon herself. Averting her eyes and trifling with a rose, she replied:

"I fear dolly was taken very ill last night."

"Ill!" cried both the children.

She continued hesitatingly: "A spark flew on her from the grate, and so poor dolly was burnt to cinders."

Minnie began to cry bitterly, and pressing her little hands on her heart, complained of its feeling sore. Winnie had riveted her glittering eyes on her mother, and bit her lips.

"There now," said Kathleen, "that comes of your being so careless."

"Oh, don't scold!" interrupted Edleen, so distressfully that both Vaughan and Kathleen glanced anxiously at her.

"Don't cry!" whispered Winnie to her sister. "Don't cry, Minnie. Look at mamma! I know the truth; it was Tom's doing, and mamma won't tell."

The little girl immediately dried her tears, and suppressed the sobs that would rise to her throat; she even tried to smile at breakfast and to drink her tea, but she could not swallow it, and escaped to the terrace. Winnie followed

her ; and by and by the children brought in their pony, and made him beg for breakfast on his hind-legs.

"It was Tom's doing, wasn't it?" whispered Winnie to Kathleen, when they went upstairs to lessons.

Kathleen reddened. "I don't think so."

"But *I* do ; I *know* it ; and so would you, if you weren't so fond of Tom !"

Edleen had been busy with her accounts all the morning. She had written to Lewes, her husband's head clerk, for money ; and now, feeling utterly tired and exhausted, she turned to her only comfort, the piano, and began to improvise.

At first her fingers strayed listlessly among the keys, for the figures were haunting her still—those dreadful figures that scorched her brain like red-hot iron.

But by degrees the sounds began to gain power over her, and raising her deep, mellow, sorrowful voice, she slowly drifted off into song. When a melody did not suit her, she shook her head and began anew.

She was so absorbed that she did not notice what was passing around her. Winnie had stolen in, and stood behind her chair, opening her eyes wide and listening with intense delight. Soon after, Kathleen crossed the terrace and approached one of the windows, followed by Tom, who was eagerly speaking to her. Winnie cast a displeased glance at them, and quickly turned to her mother again, whose wonderful talent invested her with a supernatural charm in the little maiden's eyes. "Mamma isn't very fond of me, but I love her dearly, because she sings like the angels. The angels wouldn't take much notice of me either, for I'm only a little girl, and often naughty. But Kathleen makes one so naughty !" mused the child, moving her shoulders as if she would shake off some evil influence. The morn-

ing had been stormy in the school room ; little Winnie had cried bitterly, and her little heart felt very heavy still. She would have liked to give it into somebody else's keeping. But nobody wanted it. Nobody understood that she wished she could take it out and have it made different, good and gay. And there stood Kathleen, with the sunlight falling through her red parasol and making a halo about her head ; and she was so beautiful, so dimpled, so red and graceful, and Tom had seated himself on a low garden stool, and was looking up at her with such insolent admiration !

"How came you to know about my crossing the river in the dark and the storm?" he was asking her.

"That's my secret."

"Well, do you also know that my boat was upset, and that I could only save myself by swimming?"

Kathleen's eyes looked very bright and blue under her black lashes.

"Why, you told me you had no clothes but those you were wearing."

"Well, I dried them ; that's to say, I sat down in them before the fire."

"I like your stories," observed Kathleen.

"I dare say !"

"Do you know why?"

"Because they are about myself."

"That's not the reason."

"Because of their novelty, then."

"Wrong again."

"Because I have so many adventures."

"No."

"Because you can look at me while I tell them."

"Did I happen to be looking at you just now?"

"No, you happened to be looking at your pretty little foot in its new shoe. No. Well, why?"

"Because I need not believe them."

"Of course not. I don't believe yours either, you know."

"Mine?" Kathleen grew scarlet.

"Ah, yours! If you say you didn't stand at the window watching for me last night, I don't believe you; for I came on purpose to lure you to that window, and I saw you at it, too!"

"That's not true."

"Don't be rude."

"You said you hated polite girls."

"Of course I do, because I fancy they must be ugly."

"Can't you see whether they are ugly or not?"

"Oh, no! I see nothing but what people show me, and hear nothing but what they tell——"

"And say nothing but——"

"What *they* think. For instance, you are thinking at this moment that you'd like to kiss me."

"To strike you."

"Please strike me!"

"Do you deserve it?"

"I? I deserve—ah! if you knew what I deserve, you'd shrink from me in horror."

"You! But you are laughing, Tom!"

"Am I to squeal, like Winnie, when you teach her? Would I were in Winnie's place; but as Tom, not as Winnie! I'd give you a kiss for every scolding, and twenty for every blow."

The child heard her name, and looked around with contracting brows, but she quickly turned her back upon them again. She would have put any distance between herself and those insipid whispers stealing across her mother's heavenly strains.

"And they are false, both of them," she thought, in deep disdain. "Father knows that they tell stories, and he doesn't punish me like mamma, when Kathleen complains of me. She'll tell mamma directly that I've been naughty; she'll make such a fuss again!" The small mouth drooped; the fine gray eyes glittered with unshed tears, and the little heart swelled as though it were too big for its dwelling-place. But then it grew calm again over the beautiful melodies.

Suddenly Edleen broke off in the midst of a strain and passed her hand across her brow. Then she heard the bantering voices outside, and exclaiming, "Ah, Tom!" she hurried to the window without seeing Winnie. The child climbed softly on the piano-stool and began to play the melodies she had just heard; her little hands were not long at a loss among the keys, but quickly found the notes she wanted, and a few chords to match them.

"Winnie!" cried Kathleen, "you are not to play to-day; you have been naughty."

"As she generally is," said Tom, drawing his arm through his mother's, and beginning to pace the terrace with her.

Kathleen pulled a rose to pieces and let its petals fall to the ground, while Winnie, who had heard her little sister call, and who avoided staying alone with Kathleen whenever she could, slipped quietly from the room.

Tom had come! The mother's heart went out to meet him. He had come. He didn't come only for money, then! He came to her—to her love! She forgave him all the torture of the last twelve hours. She did not ask him where he had been. She said nothing to him about the wrong he had done in the night, for reproaches always drove him away on the spot; he could not stand them.

In the mines they were ringing noon. The noise of the hammers subsided. A few minutes later Vaughan turned the corner of the house, escorted by his two little daughters, who had run a great way to meet him, and were chatting busily to him. When he saw Tom on his mother's arm his expression changed. He dropped his children's hands.

"Tom, come here."

Tom obeyed, like a dog that expects a whipping.

"You do not suppose that you can sit down at my table after the way you have spent the last hours? I know everything. You will dine in your own room, for you have disgraced yourself before my workmen. Do you fancy that I am ignorant of what you have done with the money you got here last night?"

"Oh, if I am beset with spies——"

"Whose fault is that? Who dishonors my house? No, there is no room for you at my table to-day."

"If I am driven away, I go," said Tom, walking off with quick steps.

The tears rose to Mrs. Vaughan's eyes, and Kathleen trembled with agitation. Only the little girls seemed gay, tittering softly at an ant's trying to carry off a caterpillar. They looked hard at it in order not to see anything else.

Had it not been for Minnie, dinner would have been a very silent meal that day. But Minnie was accustomed to come to the rescue in times of emergency, and to chatter, chatter, chatter till brows grew smooth again and lips unlocked. During the first half-hour, her silvery accents were almost the only sounds to be heard; but nobody listened much to them except the footmen, who would have liked to kiss the child's fairy curls and feet.

"If Harry knew, every time I gave him a little money,"

Edleen was thinking, "his severity would repulse and scare my boy away altogether."

"If Edleen knew what her son is," thought Vaughan, "she would die of grief."

"If Vaughan knew that we love each other, he'd kill us," thought Kathleen.

"If Kathleen knew that I saw them together and heard what Tom said, how kind she'd be to me to keep me quiet," mused Winnie.

"If papa knew of Tom's beating Prinnie, he'd beat him again," said Minnie to herself, as she chattered on—all about the poor woman who had but one hand, and the linnet who was teaching her little ones to fly, and how one had fallen out of the nest and broken its poor little neck, and how its poor eyes were quite dead and dim. Nobody seemed to have had so remarkably eventful a morning as the youngest of the party; her store of topics was inexhaustible.

"Papa," said Winnie, suddenly breaking her long silence, "doesn't an ant know that it can't carry a caterpillar?"

"Oh, yes, it finds that out very soon, and then it calls its fellows to come and help."

"Just like a human being."

"Ants are cleverer than human beings in some things. They are wonderful workmen, architects, and miners."

"Why, who teaches them?"

"God, I suppose."

The gray eyes darkened. "If God teaches the ants, why doesn't he teach the little children too?"

"Did you never see how tenderly the ants carry their eggs about? God has given the little ants mothers and teachers too."

"And they carry them about?"

"Yes; out into the sunshine and in from the rain, with great care."

"But how did God teach the very first of them?"

"Don't ask such stupid questions!" said Edleen impatiently. "Just look how Minnie is eating, Kathleen! you pay no attention whatever to her manners."

"Run to the garden, children!" said Vaughan. "Sitting still is not to your taste, I know."

Edleen dropped into a rocking-chair in the shade. Vaughan took up the newspapers, and Kathleen strolled down to the pond to feed the swans. The little girls got Prinnie harnessed to their small chaise and drove gayly up to the terrace.

"What are those stripes on his side?" asked Vaughan.

The little groom reddened, and kept silence. Minnie and Winnie exchanged glances. At last Winnie said so softly that none but her father could hear: "Tom whipped him."

Father and children looked apprehensively at Edleen, but she was lost in thought, idly trifling with the tassel of her sunshade.

"You must not be angry with me, Edleen," said Vaughan, seating himself beside her. "How am I to save Tom, if I dare not treat him with severity?"

"Will it save him to drive him away from food and home?" Her lips and voice trembled as her eyes rested indifferently on the pretty children in the pony-chaise.

Kathleen skirted the pond, and strayed along a path interspersed with steps and bridges which led down to the river-side. There was a rocky hollow near one of these bridges, rich with fern and herbage, and Kathleen crept into it and lay down among the flowers to dream.

"If I strike him, he'll kiss me," she mused; and then she pictured to herself repeatedly, when, how, and what for she would strike Tom; and as she mused, she grew red and hot, and pressed her cheeks against the fronds, and covered her eyes with flowers till dazzling colors seemed to whiz before them.

"I prefer his falsehoods to other people's truth-telling. Vaughan is so blunt in his honesty. And how he treated him! I should have liked to run after him! Poor Tom! He had but just escaped drowning, and felt hungry, and didn't get a crust of bread off his mother's table. Poor Tom!" Kathleen wept, and the flowers were not pleased to find the dew so warm and salty to-day.

By and by she heard voices behind the rock and steps approaching the bridge.

"Temorah!" said Tom. "Temorah, do listen to me!"

A very lovely girl, in the black garb, black cloak, and high felt hat worn by Welshwomen, stepped upon the bridge and leaned her arms on its railing, holding a big bunch of field-flowers in her hand and turning her back to the spot where Kathleen lay buried among the ferns. A ray of sunshine stole through the tree-tops and illuminated the fresh face, the dreamy eyes, with their dark-golden brows and lashes, and the coral lips.

"My mother warned me on her very death-bed that I must never listen to you."

"But dear, beautiful Temorah!" said Tom coaxingly, while the sun steeped his face in ruddy radiance and strewed golden sparks in his green eyes. "What harm can I do you? Why shouldn't I talk a little to you? If you knew how unhappy I am, how ill my step-father treats me——" Tom broke off and wiped his eyes.

"Your step-father?" said Temorah, looking at him.

"He used to beat me half-dead, and to-day he has turned me out of his house."

Tom laid his head on his folded arms as they rested on the railing, and sobbed aloud, while the sun fondled his black hair.

Temorah felt her heart beat, but she stood motionless, firm and erect.

"Are you hungry?"

"Of course I am," murmured Tom.

Temorah looked at him again and at the sunlight playing among the shadowy foliage below. A roe came near, sniffed the air for a moment, and disappeared at a bound.

Tom raised his head.

"I shall soon be nothing but a hunted animal, and if I ask you to shelter me in your cottage, it is because I have no place left where to lay my head."

"I dare not," said Temorah, standing even more erect than before.

"Why not? You have nobody. You are an orphan. And I am banished from my mother's roof. We are both very unhappy, Temorah; so unhappy that we need not account to any one for what we do."

"Oh, yes—to God!"

"God has forsaken us."

Temorah stared at the landscape before her; all nature seemed aglow with joy, with the overflowing satiety of perfect happiness. And she had wept so much, so much! She had been to her mother's grave, picking the flowers that grew profusely about it. She had wept so much, and called upon her mother, telling her how handsome Tom was, and that she loved him almost as well as the dead. And her mother had not answered a word! Her father

had perished in the mines long ago, and Edleen and the children were kind to her, and Tom had been kindest of all. And now Tom was so unhappy!

"Shelter me this one night!" the young man pleaded, stealing his strong, supple arm under her cloak. As he drew her toward him, he felt the passionate throbbing of her heart against his hand. His eyes flashed triumphantly.

"You don't care a bit for me, Temorah. You are as cold as yonder rock. You *might* do me a good turn when it doesn't cost you anything."

"It costs me everything!"

"Well, let it cost you everything, then, and love me! Take me in this once!"

"Come——" she murmured.

He caught her to his breast with a shout of joy. The birds seemed to exult, the river rippled gayly, the leaves fluttered in the summer air.

"Temorah is mine! Forests, forests, Temorah is my own!" cried Tom ecstatically.

Temorah steadied herself against the bridge-rails, and looked as white as death.

"Hush!" she whispered. "My mother might hear you."

"Ah, Temorah, if you knew how sweet love is! If you knew how happy the roes are, and the dragon-flies, down to the tiniest beetle!—if you knew, you would deck your house with flowers to receive me!"

"I will deck it so, for I love you."

And thus they passed on, arm in arm, like two splendid flowers, with the sunlight upon them.

When they had disappeared around the rock, the fern began to move. Kathleen raised herself, her blue eyes flashing like steel blades at an armorer's forge. She

gnashed her teeth, she panted for air, she cried out aloud, as she flung herself to and fro among the flowers.

"Tom ! Tom ! Tom ! Tom ! I cannot bear it ! I shall die ! I shall die, Tom ! Come back ! It's a lie ! Tom, Tom, hear me ! I shall die !"

A savage, hot, frantic pain swept over her like lava. And nature smiled as before, smiled upon the lovers, and had not a pitying cloud to overshadow the solitary, breaking heart which beat fast against the ground and cursed the rich, unsympathizing earth that had borne it.

Kathleen had never known sorrow before that hour. Now it came upon her with overwhelming force. She felt as if every fiber in her body were being wrenched asunder. The ground seemed hot as hell beneath her. She had crammed her mouth with earth to silence herself, and now she thought it must suffocate her. Then she started fearfully, as a bird of prey swept by her, bearing a shrieking little captive in its claws. And then she sprang to her feet and ran forward, she knew not whither.

On, on, only away from her pain, from his home, from himself, from every human being. She had left her hat and gloves among the fern, and sped on unconsciously, like the roe flying from an unknown danger.

Then she came at last to the churchyard. A lovelier spot could hardly have been found in God's wide world. It lay in a small dell, shady with trees, sheltered from the wind by mighty rocks, with a narrow outlook upon the distant sea. Peace and holy quiet dwelt among its lichened stones. Birds and flowers had chosen it for their home ; among the ivy clustering round its withered tombs, the nightingales had built their nests. Its silence seemed to invite the girl's troubled spirit to repose.

She passed listlessly in and out among the graves, until

her eyes were attracted by the name "Temorah," on a plain, wooden cross. She bent down and ascertained that her rival's much lamented mother lay buried there, and an ugly thought darted through her brain. Drawing a small pen-knife from her pocket, she cut the word "Tom" in big letters into the cross. "There," she muttered, "now you see what your daughter is. Now I've told you. Do you hear me?" She smiled.

As she sat still, resting from her work, she remembered that Temorah was gifted with what the country-people called "second sight," and would easily find out who had been near the cross. "Bah! she won't come here any more. She'll be ashamed."

Her heart grew quite cold and calm, as she watched the lengthening shadows. And so she rose, at last, and walked to the rocky entrance of the churchyard, quietly, as though she were taking a pleasant walk. She stopped before a withered, moss-grown slab of granite, to decipher some lines she saw engraved upon it, and as she passed on again they clung to her memory with the vividness that things acquire in hours of great mental suffering :

Three human hearts, three human hearts,
They have been laid in the churchyard mold ;
But the heart of the hero can find no rest,
While battles are fought by the brave and bold,
The brave and bold.

Three human hearts, three human hearts,
They lie in the shade of willow and yew ;
But heart of the mother can find no rest,
While pity is felt by the tender and true.
The tender and true.

Three human hearts, three human hearts,
They are covered with turf where flowers have sprung ;
But the heart of the maiden can find no rest,
While love is sweet to the fair and young,
To the fair and young.

CHAPTER III.

RICH AND HAPPY.

"NINE!" cried Tom, as he dashed the dice on the table. "Nine! I've got most! Another glass of whisky, fairest Ginevra, joy of my soul, pearl of Glanberris, queen of the taverns from Carnarvon to Cardigan. And another glass, sweetheart. And another, gem in my beggar-crown. There's money for you, and a splendid ring which I slipped from my mother's finger. Look at that stone. It came from the brow of an Indian god. My father captured it. He rushed into the temple, with the Hindoos after him; he slew all that came in his way; the temple was steeped in blood. My father flew up to the idol, dashed it to the ground and wrenched the stone out of its forehead——"

"What with?" asked one of the men standing or sitting around the table, on which a single lantern was burning. They did not know how picturesque they looked in that uncertain light, with the heavy tobacco smoke wreathing about their stalwart forms and well-cut, weather-hardened faces, these giants of the hills, who reft the earth's womb of its hoarded treasures. Their hostess, Ginevra, looked as sturdy as they. Tall and straight in her black attire, with her shadow reaching to the smoke-stained ceiling, she seemed in no hurry to take the sparkling jewel which Tom held out to her—whether from a feeling of dignity, or from

ignorance of its value, was not legible on her fresh young face.

"Ah, yes, my father was a hero," continued Tom, ignoring the interruption. "Not one of your shabby misers who think of nothing but gain, and turn every farthing to account. That's why he came by such treasures."

"Queer that they didn't make him richer," said another.

"He was like me," cried Tom; "sharing all he had—giving all who asked. He could never keep anything to himself."

"Twelve!" cried a third huskily, casting the dice anew. "Hand over!"

"Here, my lad!" And Tom threw the silver across to him.

"With what did he break the stone out?" repeated the first speaker.

"With his sword, of course. Fairest Ginevra! what will your hand say to such splendor?"

"Stones pass through our hands; but they don't stick to them," said one of the miners.

"It's valuable," opined another.

"Valuable," cried Tom; "it's worth a fortune. I'm a great deal richer with it than my step-father is with all his money, and I give it away for a glass of whisky. That's *my way*"

Just as he was about to drop the ring into the hostess's hand, another hand, large and powerful, with thick veins and knotty fingers, intercepted it, and a deep voice said:

"Nay, my lad, this ring is not yours to give. It comes from my master's mother, old Mrs. Vaughan. It has nothing to do with your father's heroism. I shall ask your mother whether she is willing you should have that ring."

Tom sat for a moment, stunned with surprise. Then he

saw the intent, questioning faces around him, and started up.

"Since when does your power extend to my mother's property?" he demanded insolently.

"Ever since she has been under my master's protection and receives everything at his hands."

Tom stepped behind the chair of one of the men, away from the light.

"And since then you weigh the bread she eats, the money her clothing costs—the price of her beauty!"

The foreman calmly lifted the lantern to his face.

"No," he replied; "hitherto I have only weighed her son, and found him too light in the balance. It's no use trying to hide from me. I see the dice, I see the money and the flushed faces. As to your speeches, I know them already; they are all alike. Now mind you; if you teach my master's workmen your ways, you'll get into trouble with me!"

"I do them no harm."

"Don't you though? And who talked about Mr. Vaughan's avarice and other people's generosity?"

"I spoke truth. I am frank by nature and can't help saying what I think. Maybe it's *your* doing that I think so ill of Mr. Vaughan."

The other's veins began to swell in his forehead, and his bushy gray eyebrows lowered so threateningly, as his eyes, hard and clear as sapphires, riveted themselves on the young fellow before him, that the latter looked down and bit his lip in silence.

"If it is my doing," said the old man, and the lantern trembled in his hand, "you are most imprudent to brave old Owen. If I cannot spare your mother's feelings, the fault is yours, you vagrant, and I have no pity with you.

There is but one way for me, the straight way, which I have followed all my life."

The foreman's voice was deep and hardly overloud ; and yet the walls rang with it, while the ceiling seemed to tremble in the flickering light of the lantern. Old as he was, he towered high above the others. Tom looked like a reed bending before the storm by his side.

Nobody spoke. Owen held the lantern a while in Tom's livid face, looking steadily at him. Then he set it on the table, and left the room with heavy, sounding steps, banging the door so violently behind him that the wall shook.

When he was gone, Tom lifted his head and showed his white teeth ; but his smile did not look genuine.

" Well, lads, now that old screech-owl is off, we'll drink and be merry as long as I've a penny left in my pockets. I mean to go to Australia to seek my fortune. Who'll go with me ? "

But it was as if a cold mist had suddenly drifted into the room, and dimly separated the late compeers from each other. One by one they took their caps and stole away.

Tom tried to make a parting sensation by calling out, " Fairest Ginevra ! I beg a couch for this night and a crust of bread. My step-father has driven me from house and home. I know not where to turn."

The effect of his speech was somewhat lessened, however, by the young gentleman's being seen riding Mr. Vaughan's best cob so madly over hill and dale on the following morning, as if he wanted to shatter the noble creature's limbs. And such was really his desire. But the horse was cleverer than its rider for the nonce, and got home safe and sound.

On that same morning, Mrs. Vaughan sat in her drawing-room, burning red, with the fatal ring in her hand, cowering before old Owen's flashing eyes.

"If you had allowed me to horsewhip your son, I should not have to tell you to-day that he'll come to the gallows. My master does not want to pain you. But if you go on in this way nobody will be able to spare you the end."

Edleen clasped her delicate hands convulsively, and moved her dry lips. She felt dazed and suffocated under the fire of the old man's eyes. She did not even dare to cry.

"I know that my child and I have always been looked upon as intruders in this house," she said at last, trying to steady her quivering voice.

"Our master was free to marry again, and we had no business to look upon any one as an intruder whom he chose to receive into his house. Our business lies solely with the property he acquired by hard labor, and which we are bound to protect."

"How can you make such an ado about a few pounds?"

"The amount does not signify. It will be a question of many pounds by and by, and then you will entreat old Owen, on your knees, to save your child, and it will be too late."

"But is he so dreadfully bad?"

The old man compressed his lips at the childlike simplicity of that question.

"My dear mistress," he said slowly, "pray lay your hand in mine, and promise me solemnly to be firm to your son, to give him no more money, but to send him to me whenever he wants any. Promise me! I want you to be firm in spite of yourself."

Edleen hesitatingly placed her slight hand in his strong, steady grasp.

"I have your promise," he said. "I think I deserve to be trusted a little, for I have never thought of myself all

my long life, but of my old master and his son, and his son's children ; I have shared good and evil days with them, and God knows I want the good ones to gain the upper hand now, and to smooth my master's troubled brow again."

"I regret that my son and I cannot return to our old poverty and blot out every trace of our lives here," said Edleen bitterly.

"And I am sorry that I cannot make you strong and firm, and that you are angry instead of trusting me."

"Nay, I trust you blindly, dear Owen ; you know that. You are the pillar of our house."

"Please don't. Words are nothing to me. The instant I have turned my back, your son stands where I have stood, and mocks me ; and you laugh and give him whatever he asks. He deserves the horsewhip. Instead of making fine speeches, you should have said to me long ago : 'Owen, take my boy in hand and make a man of him.'"

"I could not have done that. I wrestled with death for him at one time ; I nursed him like a flower ; it was a miracle that he lived."

"And you let his soul drift to perdition. No, my idea of a mother's love is different."

"You cannot understand a mother's love, dear Owen."

"Evidently not."

"It has no bounds."

"No."

"It is a passion that verges on sin."

"And on crime. And warnings are powerless against it." He turned to go. "But I have your sacred word. A word is stronger than everything, after all."

"Yes, it is sacred, sacred indeed !"

Owen had hardly left the room, when Tom slipped in

from the terrace, where he had been eavesdropping for some time.

"Of course it is sacred, you old pharisee, you hypocrite ! Who knows what *he* steals himself ! They say he has two houses in London."

"O Tom !"

"Fact, mother. I know those upright people well, they're a horrid set. Mother, dear mother, give me a little money."

"Again ! I dare not."

"Ha, ha, ha ! You dare not. Why, what harm can the old screech-owl do you, if you give me a little ? I want it so badly. You can't stand by and see your child disgraced ? Mother, dear little mother !" He flung both his arms around her waist.

"There, now she is in my power. No promise stands against violence. How they have frightened my poor little mother ! she trembles like a startled birdie ; her little heart flutters. Nasty old kite ! Did you see his claws ? such crooked, money-clutching claws ! Fie, mother ! into what a grasping set we have drifted ! And you'll see, my sisters are of the same stock. We two shall never find sympathy or comfort among them, and must struggle on through life by ourselves. My poor, sweet mother !"

She listened to his honeyed speech as the roe does to the decoy whistle, and it was not long before she unlocked the fatal cash-box again. She fancied her hands must blush as she did so, white though they were.

She felt the degradation of breaking her promise and of not defending old Owen against her son's shameful calumnies ; but she detested the old man, and would gladly have believed in his dishonesty in order to have a right to hate him. Tom had long gone off with his booty, and she still

stood with a blank look in her eyes, unconsciously twisting the recovered ring between her fingers and wiping it in her handkerchief, as if to efface the touch of unclean hands upon the gold.

She felt herself gliding down a slope which would end in a terrible precipice by and by ; only she did not know exactly where the fatal abyss lay.

"Mamma, mamma ! papa says we're going to the vicar's ! We're going to the Gwynnes' ! Make haste, mamma !" cried the children, rushing into the room and pulling their mother by hands and skirts to hasten her preparations for the drive.

"Well, where is Kathleen ?"

"Oh, she's dressed already. She's putting on her hat."

"Come, mamma ! Come, mamma ! The carriage'll be here directly. Come, mamma !"

Going to the vicar's was always a treat for the children, and to Edleen's heavy heart the idea of a long drive and a visit at that peaceful house was very soothing. She hoped to find repose for her troubled mind.

Vaughan was grave and silent in his carriage-corner ; his wife did not care to speak, and Kathleen had grown strangely apathetic and taciturn of late ; but the children were brimming over with joyous talk about the fallow deer in the park, the splendid trees, the sparkling meadows, and the mountain river rushing on its headlong course in primitive savageness, disdainful of the cultivation which surrounded it. The wheels rolled on smoothly and noiselessly through the lovely country ; no sound stirred but the even trotting of the horses. They passed the miners' villages, where the women hurried to their thresholds to smile and courtesy. Vaughan was extremely popular with the country people, and the beauty and glowing happiness in that carriage were a pleasant sight

to all. Many a brow cleared, and the faith in earthly felicity revived in many a heart as they drove by.

At length they turned into the fine centennial park which hid the ancient Gothic vicarage building in its hoary depths. Under the arches of the grand old trees the horses' tramp sounded hollow as in a vaulted hall.

A couple of fine, shaggy dogs rushed to meet them, barking and fawning; the peacocks half-furled their tails and retreated with discordant cries. The warm sunlight glittered on the high bow-windows, and played mischievously among the dense, dark ivy, clinging with giant arms about the time-worn masonry. Three children, two girls and a boy, ran joyously across the lawn to welcome their little friends in the carriage. Their hair was cut in straight fringes over their eyes, and floated down in long curls behind. They were so alike, as though they had all three been painted by an artist who would draw but once upon his imagination for the gold of their hair, the brilliancy of their eyes, and the bright chubbiness of their cheeks. They were glowing with health, and Edleen winced at the frail appearance of her own children beside this giant race. The dogs immediately pushed their black noses in Winnie and Minnie's faces; one of them even knocked Minnie down, jumped on her with his forefeet, and finally crouched by her, beating the ground with his shaggy tail. The children's peeling laughter at this scene caused quick steps to approach from the hall. Two beautiful girls, tall and slender, like young poplar trees, with crowns of fair plaits above their soft, flower-like faces, flew to embrace Edleen and her cousin, and lifted the little girls high in their arms, to whirl around with them and kiss them breathless.

"How strong you are, Una," said Vaughan admiringly to the eldest.

"And how you have grown, Gladys!" said Edleen.

"Too much, a great deal too much! Father is getting all the ceilings raised on account of my height!"

This speech excited great merriment as they entered the summer hall, which was about as lofty as a church.

At that moment three horsemen rode up to the porch, sprang lightly from their saddles, and came in with glad greetings. The eldest was quite a man already, the others were boys, but all three were fresh as morning, and healthy as a sea breeze.

Presently the mother of the family came in, carrying a little one on either arm, the sweetest twins you could have found in all the gardens of fairy-land. Lily and Lotty could hardly be known from each other, and had such immense eyes, as though the whole sky had got into them somehow. The mother was a very handsome woman; there was no shade of weariness in her calm, classic face, her harmonious air and manner conveyed an idea of fragrance, as of a lime tree in full bloom. Had any one asked you whether she was beautiful, you would have replied: "Of course she is!" and yet you would not have known exactly what made her so, until you had seen the man who was just emerging from his library, attracted by the sound of so many merry voices. Then you would have known why Mrs. Gwynne was beautiful. If the room had been bright before, it grew quite radiant now, with the light of the vicar's magnificent eyes. His tall form, his noble features and mild kindly mouth touched one's heart before one knew him. A gentle warmth radiated from him, as though he were a center of light and heat. His children obeyed him with unquestioning devotion. His wife had no thought but of him. The poor crowded to him; the sinful kissed

the marks of his feet, and all distrusted the few who shunned him, as hopelessly wicked and lost.

It was a sunny home, indeed, which so hospitably received the weary wanderers.

"How happy they are," thought Mrs. Vaughan, gazing at the promising lads, the eldest of whom was speaking eagerly to Kathleen at a bow-window, their dark heads set off by the sunlit foliage beyond.

"You are sad, Kathleen. What ails you?" asked the young man, stealing an anxious look under the dark lashes which rested so obstinately upon her cheek. "I cannot bear to see you sad, Kathleen; you know I cannot. Do not rend my heart, but tell me what ails you."

Kathleen slowly lifted her lids and looked past him out of the window. She thought how foolish she was to reject the strong love of an excellent man and to set her heart upon a scamp. But, alas! the most perfect good sense is powerless against a foolish little heart, bent on its own obstinate, unworthy course.

"Don't ask me, Morgan; it will pass."

The twins were toddling hand-in-hand across the hall, extremely grave about accomplishing so lengthy a journey, and the elder children escorted them in ecstasies of delight, keeping off the dogs, who were evidently anxious to knock them down. Una came after, bending over them with outstretched hands; while Gladys was making the tea and heaping the plates with wonderfully thin slices of bread and butter.

The grown-up people were busy talking about the miners, and what ought to be done to promote their interests, so absorbed in a subject they all had greatly at heart that they did not hear the noise the children were making. The

tea-kettle hummed pleasantly the while, and the fallow-deer came to the windows, petitioning for their daily meal with somewhat impudent faces ; their lengthened shadows fell gracefully across the emerald-green lawn, and the birds in the trees strained their voices in emulation of the boisterous children. The boys caught hold of the dogs, and called the peacocks to be fed. There were also guinea-pigs, young rabbits, and kittens, and a tiny bernardine puppy, with fluffy hair all over his body, looking like a ball of wool, who had a kitten for his playfellow, and kept settling his clumsy black paw upon it. The kitten lay flat on her back and boxed his ears, which did not hurt him exactly, but surprised him into looking so excessively stupid that the children shouted with laughter. The twins grew frightened at the din, and would have cried but for their sisters quickly putting the rabbits in their laps, when they pulled the little creatures' tails instead, puzzled why they would not get as long as those of the dogs and cats. The children remarked that Lily and Lotty looked quite as stolidly surprised as the bernardine puppy, and this observation elicited another shout of merriment, and set the youngest boy rolling on the ground and kicking up his legs, to the dismay of his sisters.

Unhappily the pleasantest time comes to an end at last, and so did that visit at the vicar's.

The inmates of the returning carriage were not particularly desirous of taking up the heavy hearts again, which they had left by the roadside when they went in for a little enjoyment. Minnie and Winnie were thinking how the vicarage children loved to say "mamma," and were not at all afraid of her, and how much kinder Una and Gladys were than Kathleen. Vaughan mused that he had no son to bear his name creditably after him. Edleen felt a flood

of envy and bitterness sweeping through her heart, and Kathleen longed to die.

Thus they drove on in silence, and the people came to their thresholds again, and thought them happy.

Not so the family at the vicarage. The young girls and Morgan discussed Kathleen's flagging spirits, and their parents remarked that Tom would bring his mother and step-father into their graves.

"You cannot think what a life he is leading!" said the vicar. "And I fear his parents know or suspect it. They looked so careworn and so cold to each other. I am sorry one cannot help them. They might be so happy."

"If Edleen would be firmer."

"Ah, if! That's just it. But it is easy to talk. Who knows the cause of her weakness? We should pardon her if we knew."

"Poor thing!"

"Ah, poor, indeed! She will suffer the tortures of hell on this earth, and will feel that she has incurred them of her own accord."

"She rested here."

"Do you think so, love? I fear she suffered terribly in seeing our sunny children."

When the carriage stopped at the park gate till it should be opened, Tom was seen leaning against his foaming horse. He was evidently in conversation with somebody, a woman, who glided swiftly behind the trees, but not before Kathleen had recognized her.

Tom showed no embarrassment as he came up to the carriage.

"You've been to the Gwynnes'. Got nicely bored, didn't you? I want to break that horse, but he grows only more restive when he gets hot. His veins are ready to

burst, and when you tickle him he goes mad." The light touch of his whip made the animal plunge furiously.

"Must you needs spoil him?" quietly demanded Vaughan.

"Tom, it is not your own!" cried Edleen, the hot blood flooding her cheeks and throat.

The horses moved on. Tom turned to follow the woman among the trees, and Kathleen saw him go.

"And I broke my word to-day," thought Mrs. Vaughan.

"Maggie!" cried the children to their old nurse. "here's news for you. The Gwynnes are going to order twins for us, too; but little boys. We want to have twins like them. They've given us two little rabbits to begin with; look at the sweet little dears; but the twins will soon be here, themselves, quite surely. No, don't laugh, Maggie, the Gwynnes can do anything. They had ordered twins for themselves and they got them. So you see, Maggie."

"We are not so rich as they; we can't have things so easily."

"We *can* have twins, Maggie! They don't cost much, except in the way of clothes, and we'll give them some of our own. Yes, indeed, Maggie! See if we don't get those twins, one for each of us."

CHAPTER IV.

TEMORAH.

"Who was that girl in the carriage?" asked Temorah, as she stood by the park gate.

"Nobody! it's no concern of yours who she was!" said Tom impatiently, still incensing the horse with his whip and

again restraining it with his muscular hand and green eyes, of which it evidently stood in dread.

"It does concern me," returned Temorah between her teeth, "for she loves you; she loves you so madly that she would kill you rather than resign you to another woman."

"Nonsense."

"Take care; she knows something for which she will revenge herself. I saw it in her face."

"Temorah, I'm not afraid of the devil himself; but when your eyes grow fixed and your lashes begin to glitter in that uncanny way of yours, my flesh creeps. I don't like your fashions altogether. What are you doing here?"

"I was waiting for you, because I knew you would come this way."

"Pooh, I didn't know that myself."

"Perhaps not, but I did. I also knew I should see a woman who loves you, and now I have seen her, and her ice-cold eyes have not killed me. She has ice-cold eyes under her black lashes. Ugh. They made me shudder."

Tom laughed aloud, "Why, you're strong enough to carry her up Snowdon in one hand."

"But Snowdon can bury us both in his snow."

"You bore me!"

Temorah put her hand to her heart and turned ghastly pale, as she leaned against a beech tree.

"What's the matter now?" asked Tom roughly.

"Tom, Tom. Lay your hand on my heart. My heart is beating still. Tom, I cannot bear it. Tom, Tom, I *am* so wretched."

He sprang lithely on his horse. "If you blubber, I'm off. I detest that sort of thing. You wanted my love, and you've had it."

The horse started at a furious gallop, and disappeared among the trees.

Temorah stood still, great heavy tears gathering on her lashes and slowly falling to the ground, as the rain drops from the leaves after a thunderstorm, while her lips quivered with bitter, suppressed grief. Then she drew herself up as though she would raise her soul and body in one effort, and passed away with long, elastic steps.

The magnificent scenes through which she sped possessed no charm for her ; she thought only of her lonely cottage on the mountain-side, and of the bolt inside her door, and of how she would be alone in there, quite alone, with that bolt drawn between herself and the world.

She passed through a narrow ravine along a clear mountain brook. The rocks on either hand admitted sufficient light for the growth of flowers everywhere, and blooming creepers hung down from above, brushing her high hat, and dropping their sweet yellow farina upon it ; but she saw and felt nothing.

At last her weary feet reached the green forest-dale in which her cottage lay, with its dark slate roof, its white shutters, its clusters of rose and honeysuckle. It looked a place of all others to be happy in. And she had been happy there before her parents' death—so happy that her laugh had been a proverb with the miners.

She entered the little kitchen, with its immense chimney, where the pewter and earthenware shone with cleanliness. She opened a low brown door, and stepped into her room, whose wainscot was blackened with age, except where the frequent touch of hand or duster had polished it to a bright golden hue. A kind of cupboard-door stood ajar to let the air in upon the large bed in the recess behind it. She opened a second door in the wainscot and stowed away her

hat and cloak. Then she dropped into a great old wooden easy-chair by the window, folded her hands on her knees, and began to think. She sat there like a carved image, motionless, measuring the abyss yawning before her and the way she would have to go. To her strong nature the thought of ending life and its tortures did not present itself for a single moment; she merely considered how she could hide from every eye what concerned herself alone. Thus she sat. The spinning-wheel stood still and looked at her in wonder. The clumsy old clock, with its painted face, ticked monotonously, quietly, slowly, like a step that never reaches its goal, however many milestones it leave behind it, however many generations it pass by, however many tears it tread into the dust.

The roses peeped and nodded in at the window, trying to reach the light-brown head they loved to fondle; but Temorah sat motionless, lost in thought. The dusk had gathered, and still no tiny, blue column of smoke rose from Temorah's cottage. She did not care whether hunger had any part in the dismal gnawing at her heart. Her teeth were set as if she would never unlock them again; her fixed eyes saw nothing but Tom vaulting on his horse—Tom, with his pretty face and impatiently glittering eyes, with the cruel words, "You've had it!" on his thin lips, and with his slender back, as he rode away without looking round.

The night closed in. The flowers outside the cottage wrapped themselves in shadows; only Temorah's white face showed against the dark background still.

A footfall grew audible on the narrow pathway. The blood swept tumultuously to Temorah's heart, to her lips and cheeks. But her quick ear soon told her that the step on the gravel and the hand on the door-latch were not his.

"No one here?" demanded a deep, melodious voice in

the empty kitchen. "No fire and no smoke? No smile to welcome the old man?"

Temorah hastily struck a light and appeared in the doorway, fair and grave; her face had grown too serious to smile during the last hours. The candle-light fell on a tall man in a wide cloak, with white, flowing beard reaching down to his belt, white locks waving about his head, and blue, thoughtful, unfathomable eyes beneath his hoary brows. He bore a carefully covered harp on his back.

"Ah! Llewellyn," said Temorah; her voice sounded hoarse, as though she had not spoken for years.

"What has happened here during my absence?" asked the old man. "Where is Temorah, who used to fly into my arms, to sit on my knees, and coax the song from my lips?"

At these questions Temorah's strength gave way. She laid her head against the dark doorpost and wept distressfully. The old man slid the harp from his shoulder, took the candle from her and set it on the sideboard, where the old pewter dishes grew vivid with its reflections, lit the fire on the hearth, and searched the cupboard for some cordial, which he held to the poor girl's lips; she did not try to interfere with his intentions. His tall form threw great, wavering shadows across the room, as he bent and rose again, while Temorah sobbed on, clinging to the doorpost to keep herself from falling down in her agony.

"My mother is dead," she said at last.

The great eyes rested on her, and a very slight shake of the white head said: "That is not all!"

If minstrels were not keen-sighted, they would find no thrilling lays; they must see the chords they stir; they must see the human heart.

Llewellyn's lips moved slowly as he gazed at the weeping girl; he saw what none might see. His eyes grew dim.

He turned away and busied himself with the fire, on which the kettle was beginning to hum.

"Nothing is so bad in times of great sorrow as fasting," he said at length; "and I am not accustomed to eat alone. People break bread with me wherever I go."

Then Temorah remembered how inhospitably she had received the general favorite; she dashed her tears away and began to cut bread.

"That's right," said the old man; "then I can rest a little. I am tired." He sat down on the bench against the wall and rubbed his knees.

"I am not always so unmindful and inhospitable, dear Llewellyn. I was only so overcome at seeing you, my only friend!" Her lips trembled anew.

"Well, I came in good time to help you to some supper. A long day makes one hungry, and one must eat, be one ever so sad. I have known sorrow make people very hungry, for it consumes their strength."

He watched her eating, and saw the rich, steaming milk bring something like color back to her cheeks.

"The housewives like my coming, because they find me handy at the hearth. I am no such dreamer as people think."

Temorah smiled. "You are perfect in everything, Llewellyn. And if the sun had not just set, I should fancy it rising this minute."

"*Just set* is saying rather too much for it. The night has long closed in. But as I saw the shutters still open and a white face at the window, I knew I might enter, late as it was."

"Late or early, you were always——" began Temorah, and broke off in great confusion.

"Ay, ay," said the old man, seeing her embarrassment.

"I always know when and where to enter ; my star shows me the right hour and road."

"Oh, how true—how true ! You came indeed at the right hour !"

"To light the fire," said he cheerfully.

And Temorah was fain to smile.

He knew that a sore heart and troubled mind are soothed by speech, and that there are sorrows which one can always unfold. So he made Temorah tell him all about her mother's death, down to the most insignificant word she had spoken and which had gained importance in the daughter's eyes. She wept a little and smiled between, and talked herself calm, and while thus speaking to her old friend, she felt as if her life were not quite so impossible after all, and as if she, who had borne so much already, would have fortitude to bear even greater sorrow now. By and by, when Llewellyn began to tell of his wanderings, she could listen quite as attentively as she had done in her gladsome childish days, when she had coaxed the stories from his lips. And when he turned to his harp at last, her heart trembled with joy. She leaned her head against the wall, and suffered her tears to flow freely while Llewellyn sang. The harp had three rows of chords, so that the minstrel's fingers had to pass between the upper ones to reach those within ; the effect was marvelous, the sweet full sound charming every music-loving ear.

The tear-drop fell among the corn
When it was young and green.
My love, take heed and go not by ;
That tear was shed for thee.
Then stay thy feet, beloved love,
And gather my tear from the bright young corn,
And bear it away with thee.
Oh, woe is me, my heart is dead,

Since I have wept that fatal tear—
The tear which fell among the corn
When it was young and green.

He had three goodly sons, I trow,
The grand old man with hair of snow,
But now no son hath he ;
One boy he bred to till the soil,
One, in the mountain's heart to toil,
And one to brave the sea.
The mountain's heart is stern and drear,
It made the youth a brazen bier.
The sea is fierce and deep,
She wrapped her prey in billows wild ;
And mother Earth, she hushed her child
Upon her breast to sleep.

Mother, the dead will awake as I weep ;
Mother, he'll wake at my woe.
Go to him, mother, and sing him to sleep ;
Mother, he never must know.
Mother, the dead will awake at my moans ;
Mother, have pity on me.
Tell him it is but the surf on the stones,
Tell him it is but the sea.

She went to the beach at break of day,
To see the ship go down ;
Ye sailors all, in this hour of dread,
Ye lovers plighted, or husbands wed !
Will none prefer my smile so gay
Unto the ocean's frown ?
I cast my heart upon the gale—
Now grasp it he who may !
I stretch my hands across the foam—
Will no one cheer my lonely home ?
Will no one tell a true-love tale,
When all is swept away ?

Llewellyn knew the power of his music ; he knew that his strains soothed many a heart and lulled many a weary watcher to sleep. He had no need to express pity in his words, for his sympathy was like a warm spring in which the sufferer bathes and heals his wounded limbs ; the spring does not speak, it only flows soothingly over the sores.

Thus the two sat singing and talking all the night. When the early dawn steeped the cottage in pale gray light, Temorah started up.

"But you have not rested, Llewellyn !" and she hastily prepared a couch for him in the kitchen, with the bedding her mother had spun and filled ; then she closed the shutters and sought her own pillow ; but, refreshing as her slumbers were, they left her cheeks pale and her eyes dark and sunken.

In the morning light she appeared more pale and sad to the old man than he liked to see her. He took leave of her with a heavy heart, promising to come again before long. She stood on the threshold in the rosy dawn, surrounded by her flowers. The dew lay like hoar-frost on the dark slate-roof, and glittered brightly in the first sun ray.

"Oh, that I could go with you !" said Temorah. She longed to clasp him in her arms as of old. But she did not dare.

He laid his hand on her head : "God keep you, my poor child ! Take courage ! A time comes when one has grown quite old, and all the wrong one has ever done or suffered is forgiven."

He turned and strode away with long steps, as though he had wings under his cloak and age had no power over him.

Temorah's lips had turned white. She stood a long time looking after him, and thought that he had guessed her

pitiful secret, and yet had not cast her from him in disdain. But the others? What would the others do?

She resolved to work with redoubled industry to lay by some means of sustenance against the time when she would have to hide from all the world. She would confide in none, and none would feel sufficient interest in her to seek her confidence.

All this she told herself with unflinching courage, while she dressed to go to her work. Her hat threw a still deeper shadow on her handsome eyes, but the quick walk through the morning air restored the color to her cheeks.

Passing through a forest-glade, she would have culled some flowers to put in her bodice, when she perceived a man lying prostrate on the grass. She approached him wonderingly, and recognized Tom, with burning cheeks and clammy brow, muttering incoherently: "Kathleen—you are handsomer after all—ay—handsomer—than the Welshwoman. Kathleen—you love—love me—she said so—you—love——" his words grew unintelligible.

Temorah drew herself up. An expression of unbounded scorn played about her lips, and her face grew hard as stone. Her love seemed to her like the tide, ebbing away and leaving nought but naked rocks and lusterless shingle behind. She had stretched out her hand for a sheaf of golden wheat, and she held empty straws in her hand. The idol of her heart, her proud, daring Tom—he lay before her, heavily drunk, and betrayed the secrets of his soul, and could name her at any moment, just as he had named the other woman. She did not even hate Kathleen now. She could have found it in her heart to go to her and warn her of her danger. She could not love him any more—never more! No, she must hate him. But she picked a few broad horseshoe leaves, and covered his face with them to

hide his shame from the sun. And then she turned away with a heavy, throbbing heart.

She passed miners going to their work, singing and joking with the recklessness of people used to daily danger. Many an honest lad among them would have been glad to enter her cottage on the mountain-side as lord and master; for she was a fine girl, strong and industrious, and highly respected in all the region, and her proud reserve only rendered her the more attractive.

So she told herself bitterly, as she looked after them and thought of the man who was sleeping off his intoxication down in the forest glade, and giving her fair name to the winds. He had been on his way to her when he dropped down heavy with wine; she shuddered to think that Llewellyn might have seen him in that state. No; she hated Tom; she could never love him again.

She was obliged to stop a moment to take breath, she felt so hot in the sunshine.

Just then a girlish figure came along the path, which she did not recognize at first. But suddenly she saw the long, black lashes raise themselves and a look of deadly hatred flash from the light blue eyes, chilling her to her inmost soul. All her former pity faded from her heart at that look, which said so plainly, "I know all about you, and can expose you whenever I choose."

How did Kathleen come to know? Had Tom betrayed her? How could any one in all the wide world know of her secret? She felt the scathful influence of that look throughout the day, like a tree which the lightning has struck and marked with a gaping black rent.

CHAPTER V.

THE BARD'S ADVENT.

"UNA's eyes are brown, Martyn, decidedly brown, like velvet, or like autumn leaves in the sun," said Morgan.

He received no answer, and perhaps he did not expect any. For he was lying on his back in the grass, with his head resting on his arms, lazily watching the leaves as they fluttered in the tree-tops and formed little shifting loop-holes for the sun to peep through. Autumn had but just begun to dye the foliage and, now and then, at long intervals, a yellow leaflet floated to the ground, like a bit of gold destined to turn to dust, the great spendthrift nature's perishable gold, abandoned to mold and decay.

Indeed, it would have been asking too much to expect a rejoinder, when his companion was busy watching for Una, who had gone to take the twins back to the house. Those lively dark eyes seemed to find the time intolerably long till her charming figure re-appeared, the green shadows and spots of sunlight flickering over her as she glided on, unconscious of the delight the said eyes were taking in her loveliness. The young man forced himself to stand still and not to abridge his enjoyment of her approach by prematurely hurrying to meet her. He even dropped his lids a little, as one does before a fine painting, and pictured to himself how she would look with a child of his own in her arms. He was a physician. His bearded face looked fresh and healthy; his eyes were keen and quick to observe all about him. He had loved Una for years, and had at last forced a confession of similar feelings from her chaste lips; and now the gates of heaven stood open, and God's sweet angels were singing for joy within.

Una returned to her former seat on the bench, by which arrangement her feet came near her brother's head, and her shoulders got into close proximity with Martyn's folded arms, for he was propping himself on the back of the bench, and immediately took occasion to whisper all sorts of foolish things in her ear. He had one of those sympathetic noses which have a slight incision at the top, and move in speaking; his head was broad and powerful, with strongly marked temples and a humorous expression at the corners of his flexible eyebrows. He was not very tall but broad-shouldered, and his fine hands caused the girls to tease him a good deal about his having become a surgeon for the sole purpose of displaying their beauty. Brimming with fun and mischief, he infected young and old with his merry humor, eliciting hearty laughter even from the grave vicar and his stately wife, while the children would skip and shout, and the very twins forget their solemnity and importance and become quite unruly under his influence. His intended brothers-in-law adored him, and the third of them freely declared his intention of becoming a physician like him, his being the only really respectable and humane vocation; whereupon his father inquired, with a smile, whether it was better to cut off people's limbs, or to comfort their souls with the Gospel. This was an embarrassing question, as the poor boy did not wish to offend either party; but Martyn came to the rescue, saying:

"Our sermons are more incisive; we act according to the Bible words, 'If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee.'"

"With the slight deviation that the eyes you pluck out belong to other people," rejoined the vicar.

Morgan was preparing to take orders; his younger brother was in the navy, and had only come home on a

short visit ; and the smallest boy decided that he would not become anything but stay as he was, that being nicest.

"I dare say !" said Gladys, who was just setting a big plate of bread and butter and another heaped with fruit on the bench beside Una. "I dare say ! eating everything other people have a right to ; getting spoilt all day long, and playing till one can't keep one's eyes open ! Gently, gently, the rest also want to eat !"

He held a peach in either hand, biting into them by turns, and glaring gluttonously the while at the biggest pear.

"There's more indoors !" he said, when he had sufficient breath to speak.

"That's our Moloch !" said Gladys. "He'll end by devouring us all."

Moloch went on munching with great composure, and hardly turned to look, when his little sisters dropped their bread and fruit and ran to meet the pony-chaise clattering up with Prinnie before it. Winnie and Minnie sat in front as drivers ; Kathleen had curled herself up on the back seat like a kitten, and the little groom stood on the foot-board, holding the ends of the reins. Morgan sprang to his feet and ran, flushed and radiant, to assist Kathleen in alighting. She jumped down with both feet at once, rebounding like a ball.

They ate, and talked, and laughed. Morgan was wholly occupied with Kathleen, who willingly accepted his gentle attentions ; they were balm to her sorrowful heart. The vicar took neither bread nor fruit, but readily mingled his sonorous voice with the young people's lighter tones, like the deep keynote of a tuneful chord. Gladys stood behind him, twining her arms about his neck. One of the little girls had perched herself on his knee and generously offered Minnie a seat on the other. Winnie stood shyly by, stead-

fastly watching him as he talked, and looking for the light of his eyes beneath his shadowy brows.

The coloring of all these heads, the green forest-shade, the marvelous reflections of playfully rippling light on forms and faces, would have delighted a painter. Kathleen's eyes were so bewitching that Morgan felt his reason deserting him ; he rose, and paced the avenue several times, struggling to regain his self-control and to repress a confession which would estrange her from him forever.

"Sit still, Kathleen," cried the sailor, "I want to paint you," and he began to make a clever little faintly tinted water-color sketch of her.

"In the character of a water-nymph or siren," he observed, painting an expanse of water around her.

"No," cried Martyn. "Make her an elf in a convolvulus cup, pliant and boyish at once."

Kathleen reddened. "That comes of having short hair," she said, passing her delicate fingers through it, and making it look the richer and blacker by the contrast.

The vicar's eyes grew a little stern as they rested upon her. Winnie followed his glance and then looked back eagerly into his eyes. The displeasure she read in them, made her friend doubly dear to her ; then there was one at least amid so many admirers who judged Kathleen aright. Winnie felt as if there were a secret—a mutual understanding—between them now, and her heart grew lighter. Morgan had made no confessions, and Gwynne esteemed his eldest son's character too highly to force himself uninvited upon his confidence. He thought merciful Providence would but prove his excellent son, and save him from misery—from what the young man would just then have welcomed as his greatest happiness. With his manifold experience of human nature, he knew that love cannot be forestalled by

warnings or neutralized by persuasion. It dies only of itself—of its own intoxicating poison.

The children had begun to show off all sorts of tricks, knotting cherry-stalks with two fingers or with their tongues, and other extraordinary feats of the same stamp.

"But I know something none of you can do," said Kathleen. Taking up a pencil, she laid it across her lashes, and those long lashes held it steadily. The joy was great at this feat, and she was asked to repeat it again and again.

"Your lashes are just the thing for a butterfly kiss," remarked Una.

"A butterfly kiss! What's that?"

Una laid her cheek against Kathleen's, and softly brushed her lashes with her own.

The spectators never forgot how those blue and hazel eyes, those dark and fair brows and lashes, blent in sweet harmony for a second, as the two lovely girls stood bathed in one reflection of golden light. They all sat silent, as before a fair masterpiece of art.

At that instant something like a refreshing breeze floated along the avenue. When a man of great power and nobleness of soul passes through nature, a secret influence is borne on the air before him, proclaiming his advent, and all grows still in expectant awe.

But this short stillness was succeeded by such peals of joy that Mrs. Gwynne came to the door to see what was going on; and lo! there was Llewellyn with his harp. The children clung to him and pulled him toward the bench; the vicar welcomed him with outstretched hands; Gladys ran into the house to fill the most antique and capacious goblet with the oldest and choicest wine they had, and brought it out sparkling like the Holy Grail in the sunlight.

"Ah!" cried Llewellyn, taking a long draught from it. "'Tis the life-blood of the earth, the soul of the sun, a most divine thought pervading liquid fire! I fancy the vine must have been Moses' burning bush, gifting him with the power of speech and the achievement of high deeds! A solitary tendril straying from paradise, loath to desert its favorite, man! The first song, from which all others have flowed! The initial thought of all creation!"

Gladys had filled the cup anew.

"I thought I saw happy faces here," continued the old man. "I saw love everywhere, and the forest tenderly inclosing all the felicity, lest grief should enter its peaceful precincts. Ah, one feels well here. Your healths!" He drank off the goblet, took a peach they offered him, and inhaled its fragrance. Winnie brought him two beautiful roses she had begged of Mrs. Gwynne—a tea and a moss rose—and the old man kissed the child's brow and kissed the flowers, and bore himself like a true minstrel, who remains a big child as long as he lives. Love and goodwill lit up every face around him. Kathleen alone eyed him with indifference and disdain; for Tom had called him an old humbug; an impostor, who could not invent anything himself, but repeated old rubbish, preferred drinking to singing, and was a pompous thief, cheating people out of the wine in their cellars and the coin in their pockets.

Martyn studied the eyes of the philanthropist Gwynne and the poet Llewellyn with profound interest. They were alike in depth and luster; the vicar's look acquired a more decided expression from his close-shaven face, every line of which added to its eloquence, while Llewellyn's was rendered dreamy by the great misty beard which enveloped him like a snow-cloud.

They made the minstrel talk and tell of field and forest,

cottage and castle, mine and meadow, of human joy and grief, of the sea and its voices, the storm and its bleak felicity, of thundering ravines and sunny valleys, and of the mysterious nights in which he watched and waited for his songs to come to him. As he spoke, his brow and hair grew luminous with the flames that stirred within.

He had seen more than all the rest—more than the physician himself, keen-sighted though he was. All secrets lay open before him, but he concealed with delicate discretion to whom they related. His narrative was not always suited to childish ears ; but Gwynne was of opinion that a childlike spirit may disclose a good deal, like nature herself, who divulges everything, because everything is pure and holy to her and of equal importance. The poet is like nature—creative and lavish, good and cruel, warm-hearted and chill, cold and stern, gold and adamant, and soft black soil, putrid and fruitful, a tranquil, limpid lake and a wild mountain stream, with turbulent falls and icy, passionate foam ; volcano and lava, aged and youthful. Who but children, and such as have remained childlike, can understand a poet ?

And indeed, no one seemed to understand him so well as Winnie, who never took her large eyes off his face, and eagerly drank in his words. She attracted him so strongly in her turn that he ended by addressing his remarks solely to her whenever he was not speaking at the tree-tops or the birds. By means of judicious questions they kept him talking, and when at last he uncovered his harp, they made him promise to stay for a good long time at the vicarage ; they could not think of letting him go.

Gladys had again replenished his goblet. The old man struck the chords, preluded, and took another deep draught before he began to sing.

I sing of woodland sweet and shady,
Of sparkling youth and beauty fair,
Of stalwart knight and gentle lady,
Of love and all that love will dare.
For love sits coy on maidens' lashes,
Like blooming bud on rose tree bright ;
But on the hero's sword he flashes,
A loadstar to victorious fight !

The glen was loud with battle-din
Thro' all the autumn day ;
The heavens frowned in sullen gloom
And thundered with the fray ;
And horses neighed, and armor rang—
They strove from morn till night ;
They would not yield their gallant fort
So long as *one* could fight.
Then fireballs whizzed above their heads,
And battered roof and wall,
Until a sea of flame had swept
O'er battlement and hall.
Young Norman saw the radiance flash
Upon a foeman's shield ;
He smote his foe, and turned his steed,
And spurred across the field.
He reached the tottering fortress-walls,
He passed the flaring port,
He dashed thro' showers of falling fire
Into the castle-court.
He called upon his plighted love,
His voice was loud and clear ;
The lady flew thro' clouds of smoke
To meet her champion dear.
He snatched her to his saddle-bow,
He held her fast and well,
He bore her o'er the burning bridge
Before it crashed and fell.
The foeman paused in wondering awe—
Was that a living man

Who burst thro' fire and hostile ranks
And fled along the glen ?
And was the snow-white thing he bore
The banner he would save ?
They saw it cling about his form,
And o'er his stirrup wave.

Such is the faith that heroes cherish,
The faith which knows not bar or stay,
But holds its course, an' though it perish,
Thro' raging fire and mortal fray !
And such is love's mysterious power !
His brows with bay and myrtle drest,
He bids the gentle maiden flower,
And fires the daring warrior's breast !

"You are sick, my child," he said suddenly to Una, who was leaning on Martyn's arm, and listening with parted lips and quick respiration. Martyn started from his reverie as if he had received a blow, and gazed in his betrothed's face.

"Sick !" he exclaimed, in great alarm. "Sick ! Where have I had my eyes then ? And I feel her every pulse, and I hear her every breath. Sick ! Una, don't you feel well ?

"Oh, so well, so well ! Just as if I were in heaven. I don't feel the ground I walk on, my feet seem so light. I think I have never felt so well in all my life."

"Old humbug," thought Kathleen, imperceptibly shrugging her shoulders.

The minstrel passed his hand across his beard and hair, and in his eyes lay the troubled thought : "Why do I speak ? Why must I always tell what I see ? How I have frightened the poor people ! But she *is* sick. Strange that no one sees it."

A light, cool breeze was rising and sighing through the leaves.

Kathleen called for the pony-chaise ; Mrs. Gwynne sent the younger children indoors ; the harp was covered up and carried to the house by the sailor lad. The vicar followed in eager conversation with Llewellyn. He had taken no further note of the minstrel's remark. People who have always been strangers to misfortune rarely believe in it, while those accustomed to grief tremble at every gust of wind.

Una declared, almost indignantly, that she felt perfectly well, while Martyn, with the torturing anxiety every physician feels for his dear ones, suddenly thought her cheeks too red, her eyes too brilliant, her nostrils too delicate, and hardly knew what he was saying in his terror.

Morgan sauntered through the park, thinking of Kathleen. Why had she been so indifferent to the bard's singing ? She had stared at the ground before her and not heard a word, a single note. What had she been thinking of ? Morgan's life had been so sunny hitherto that he had no idea of the storms which rend the human soul, and looked upon his own great love with strange surprise and wonder. He had not known that one could suffer so grievously, turning hot and cold, feeling one's pulses throb to the tips of one's fingers, and one's heart burst with despair at the beloved one's departure and frantic longing to be always near her.

He could hardly refrain from running after the little carriage, like a boy. He paced the darkening walks with uneven strides. The birds had lapsed into silence. The breeze grew sharper, and a sudden rushing and drizzling above informed him that a shower was passing over the park.

"Why is she so sad?" thought Morgan, stirring the dry leaves with his foot. He pictured to himself a pleasant little parsonage grown all over with flowers, an ancient church, and Kathleen arranging his white band and smoothing his hair, her wonderful eyes inspiring him with unheard-of eloquence. Of course she was a saint—a supernatural being, who could not understand a coarse, human passion like his. Kathleen! Such a sweet name too! Kathleen! He said it aloud and under his breath. He had cut it into a remote beech tree. He had carved it in a rock, and written it in the pocket-book which he used to wear near his heart. He would have given a great deal to possess his brother's sketch, but his love was too deep and too shy for that; where should he take the courage to ask Robert for *her* portrait? The minstrel had opened all the floodgates of his soul with that quivering harp of his, and lo! he wept. Morgan wept! He had never done that in all his life, shedding tears like the light, tepid dew that collects in flower-cups to roll down at a breath of air or the weight of a dainty drone. And she had such small feet. If he could but ride out with her once, just to place his hand under that little foot and lift her lightly into her saddle. If he could but climb some giddy, precipitous pass with her, and support her steps, or protect her in his arms against an angry bull. If he might but make her some present. Impossible; he could not think of it yet. There is no knowing how long Morgan will have to roam through the park in the company of his day-dreams.

Meanwhile Llewellyn sat in the vicar's handsome library, probably an ancient chapel, with a groined ceiling, a few isolated columns, a row of tall windows on one side, a gigantic chimney, marvelous shadows, and books, books, books everywhere. The old minstrel delighted in hearing

his friend read choice passages from these treasures, gleanings from Homer and Sophocles, which brought the tears to his eyes and quite overcame him at times.

Now, he was sitting in a big red chair by the hearth, fantastically illuminated by the flickering fire, Gladys on the rug at his feet, Una on the elbow-rest of her father's chair, Mrs. Gwynne at her spinning-wheel; Martyn stood in the dark chimney-corner and gazed fixedly at Una, while the two elder boys were looking over an illustrated book at the table, but continually turned their heads to listen to Llewellyn.

Presently Mrs. Gwynne's old governess, who was educating her children now, glided into the dusky room. She came in quietly, like a pleasant reminiscence of old times, in a soft gray dress, a white shawl of downy wool about her shoulders and a little white cap on her silvery hair. She had great, quiet eyes like mist in a fir tree, gray, thoughtful, gentle, as if many a dew-drop had silently moistened them. There was something lonely about her, until she glided to Mrs. Gwynne's chair, and whispered to her that the five little ones were in bed and waiting for her to say their evening prayers.

"Missy, dear Missy," murmured Gladys, jumping up to place a chair for the old lady, and sitting down again quickly at her feet, before the fire. Missy (she was known by no other name) was about to draw some fine crochet-work from her reticule, when Llewellyn recognized and gladly greeted her. A slight blush rose to her cheeks, and her smile disclosed beautiful teeth. Una passed behind the chairs and murmured something in her ear, whereupon Missy immediately took off her shawl and wrapped the young girl in it. Martyn fancied Una's lips were taking a faint bluish hue in the uncertain firelight.

"Are you cold?" he asked, emerging from the shade.

"Just a little. I think the air in the garden was growing chilly."

He warmed her hands between his own.

The old bard looked uneasily toward her and stopped in the middle of his animated discourse.

"Is it sad or felicitous when thoughts arise?" asked the vicar, surprised at his guest's suddenly breaking off and staring absently at the fire.

"It is the greatest felicity on earth," said the old man, with such emphasis that the vaulted ceiling echoed his voice, and his eyes grew radiant.

"I feel very happy in the pulpit," said Gwynne, "when I carry my hearers away with me by the fervor of my thoughts."

"Ay," said Llewellyn, "that is a beautiful thing too, very beautiful. But I need no hearers except the sea and the firs. When I have conceived a new song, I fling myself on the moss, if I can, and bare my breast to ease the throbbing of my heart. A song! ah, me, a song! God must have felt like that when he stretched out his hand, and the sun shone—when he breathed, and man had a living soul. A song! Love itself is less than the felicity of creating, when thought and harmony flow around you, and you thrill from head to foot with the fancy that you have found what none have known before. No digger after hidden treasures can eye his trove with equal delight. It is like the angels' *Ave* to the Virgin, and you feel the touch of wings on your brow, as though heaven had descended upon the earth. A song! Ay, love is grand, for it is creative power, but of this earth—earthly; the art of song is also creative power, but of heaven—celestial. And it is kindled at its own fires and born of its own effort; sometimes in fearful throes, in agonizing pain, in mortal fear of the spirit's breaking down

under its illustrious weight—of the humble vessel's bursting with the glowing fires within it. A song, ay, a song !”

During this speech Morgan had noiselessly entered the room. The radiance of his great love clung to his brow ; and now he heard it said that this great, heaven-aspiring love was nothing in comparison to song ! Llewellyn was too old ; he had surely forgotten all about love, or he could not have said that. So thought Morgan, while Gladys slipped out of the room to get her brothers a lamp that they might go on looking at their book, instead of pondering over love, for which they were much too young. She was quite of the minstrel's opinion ; she even went farther than he. Love seemed very foolish to her ; she could not understand how a stranger should suddenly grow dearer to one than one's father and mother. She had already communicated her misgivings to Missy, but had not obtained any satisfactory enlightenment.

“ But, Missy, you have loved us better than all the world besides.”

“ So I have, my child.”

“ Always, Missy ? ”

A warm flush had suffused Missy's face.

“ I was young at one time, and thought I should like to be happy myself, and have children of my own, but God would not have it so.”

“ You never loved any one better than my mamma ? ”

Again that hot flush.

“ I made a mistake at one time, fancying that I *might* love somebody better after all ; but God showed me that I belonged to your mother as closely as her shadow, and I stayed to be her shadow all her life.”

Gladys had not been satisfied. Her Missy ought never to have belonged to any one but themselves, body and soul,

and to have been exempt from such childish weakness as she observed in Una and Morgan.

"You see, Gladys, the time will come when you will like somebody yourself——"

"Never!" the young girl had cried vehemently. "I mean to stay with my father and mother and with the little ones. By the time they are grown up I shall be as old as you are, Missy.

"Oh, not half so old."

"Missy, you know I can't bear that. You are young—very young indeed, Missy: and we shall always live together, a hundred years or more!"

"Does it not augment the delight in one's art if others enjoy it too?" asked Gwynne of the bard, who had again lapsed into a reverie.

"Oh, one is glad of it," returned the old man, in a courteous but indifferent tone; "one is very glad indeed; but if they are not pleased, one does not care. Once the struggle and the transport over, the song is no longer the poet's property; it drops from the parent stem like ripe fruit, and people may pick it up or let it lie, as they please. One does not turn one's head to look back at it. No, the hour of creating strikes but once, and never returns."

"But has one no divine parental feelings for the children of one's brain?"

"None. They grow stale and tedious so very fast, you see; one longs for new ones. Should a time come when I find no new lay, I shall take my harp in my arms and fling myself into the sea with it," said Llewellyn energetically.

They were called to supper in the fine old family hall. The tea-kettle steamed and hummed its cosy song. Missy made the tea, Una and Gladys handed the cups about, and the cheerful conversation was continued far into the night.

CHAPTER VI.

FOR TOM.

WINNIE had crept downstairs in her little slippers before daybreak, had climbed on a chair, slid the covering off her mother's harp and tried to play Llewellyn's lay, which would not let her rest. She cried because her hands could not reach the chords. She had not noticed that a man's figure had moved away from the desk at her approach, and crouched down on a sofa under an India shawl in the darkest corner of the room. In her distress, the child went to the piano and tried to find the air there. Presently she returned to the harp with a radiant face, and the ballad resounded, strain by strain, in the breaking dawn. The child's weak voice grew pathetic as she sang; her eyes took a strange, deeply grave expression; but there was nobody by to feel awe at this first awakening of genius.

An impatient step sounded on the stairs and Kathleen came flying in with bristling hair, like an avenging angel; nothing but a flaming sword was wanting to make the impression complete.

"Must you catch your death of cold here, in your night-dress, in the chill dawn? Aren't you ashamed to run about like that? And if you make yourself ill, I'm responsible." She grasped the child by the shoulder and shook her. "And haven't you been strictly forbidden to touch the harp?" she continued, beating the little hands till they were red. "I'll whip you. I'll go to the garden and cut switches, and when you're in bed this evening, I'll punish you in a way to make you remember."

Kathleen was trembling with fury; her blue eyes seemed to emit electric sparks; the words came in choking gasps from her lips:

"You tease me to death. There you stand like a post. I'll put life in you. Your father won't be here to-night ; so your screaming won't be of any consequence, and you'll get all the whippings I've got in store for you in one go, you malicious child."

"You had better not try," said Winnie, with quivering lips and a ghastly pale face.

"If you tell, I'll whip you again."

"Then you won't stay here another hour," said Winnie.

"Bravo, bravo, bravissimo !" laughed a voice from the sofa corner. "I am pleased to see how you two carry on together ; very nice indeed !" remarked Tom, in his calmest tone.

At first the two girls stood rooted to the ground ; then Winnie ran to the sofa, struck her brother in the face with her little fist, and was gone before he had time to speak.

"You have interrupted a rare manifestation of genius," said Tom, without rising ; "the child's talent is evident and, do what you may, you will not quench it."

"What are you doing here ?" cried Kathleen. She had turned pale, and only a few purple spots at her throat and temples betrayed the frantic pulsation which was almost suffocating her. "It's her naughtiness ! she does everything to provoke me ; she does it on purpose, because she hates me."

"Indeed !" said Tom sententiously. "A little child—and hate ? Who can have taught her that ?"

"I don't know ; her own vicious nature and a bad example !" hissed Kathleen, as if aiming a shot at him.

"I hate nobody," said Tom composedly, as he rose. "Why should one hate, my child ? Loving is much more convenient !"

He approached her with his scathful eyes. She glided behind a chair and laid her hands on its back.

"Yes," she said, "I know by experience that love is a convenient thing; you slip it on like a pair of gloves; when the gloves have grown worn and dirty you throw them away and buy a new pair; that's love. Oh, yes; it's a most convenient article."

"Have you tasted the fruit and found it unripe?"

"No—over-ripe—rotten!"

"Ugh!" said Tom.

"I loathe it."

"Indeed? what a pity!"

"Yes, it is a pity to feel so disgusted—a great pity; for it is a disease one cannot cure."

"But when and where did you take this disease?"

"When and where! I don't steal into rooms at night and hide behind the furniture, but yet I know things. I know everything. And whenever I hear the word *love* now, I turn sick."

"Fie, Kathleen! dear little Kathleen! You are like a wild-cat. I really must tame and pacify you, sweetheart!" He came nearer.

"I am not your sweetheart, and you cannot tame me; have you not seen what claws I have, how I bite and scratch and strike? Haven't you seen? Haven't you seen how I revenge myself on the innocent? Then what should I do to the guilty?"

"But Kathleen, I don't know you."

"I don't know myself! You have roused all that is bad in me, and now it is astir; now it raves in me like a host of fiends!"

"I'll set everything right with a single kiss!" He tried

to put his arm around her, but she flew to the opposite end of the room.

"Sooner than you touch me, the Istwith shall swallow us, Snowdon's eternal snow shall melt, the mines shall fall in, burying all the living, and—and——"

"Well, well, that'll do. I see. But I know that things will turn out otherwise, and that I shall hold you in my arms, little cat, and kiss you as long as I list; I can wait."

"I can die!" said Kathleen, and passed out of the room with sudden cold dignity and composure.

"To-day I'm not lucky with the women in this house," said Tom; "here comes number three; let's see what *she'll* be up to."

Minnie came in with her sweet air and tried to go on smiling when she saw her brother, but already an expression of uneasiness was stealing into the limpid eyes that had not yet learned to dissemble, except for affection's sake.

"Minnie, dear," said Tom, "come here and sit on my lap a bit."

"Yes," said Minnie; "mayn't I stand?"

"As you like, here at my knee; I'll tell you a sad, sad story."

"Me?" said Minnie, longing to slip away.

"Yes. Imagine, there's such a poor, poor woman; she hasn't got a bit of bread for her five children, and yesterday I gave my last shilling to Llewellyn, because I saw that his cloak was torn. Won't you help?"

"But I haven't any money, Tom."

"No, but you've got that pretty ruby cross. I'd get a deal of money for that, if you'd allow me to sell it; of

course I would bring you most of the money and only take as much as the poor woman wanted."

"I don't want any money ; the poor woman can have it all. But what will papa say, if my cross is gone ?"

"Tell him you've lost it."

"But that wouldn't be true."

"Say you've given it away."

"Then he'll ask, to whom ?"

"Well, say, to poor people, because you've got no pocket-money ; then he'll give you some directly."

"If I only knew, whether it's quite right to give it. Hadn't I better ask Kathleen ?"

"Oh, no ; Kathleen is in one of her tempers ; she gave Winnie a regular beating just now, and she's vexed with me too, because I saw her."

"She beat Winnie ?" Minnie's lips began to tremble, and she put up her little hand to keep them still. "Why did she beat Winnie ?" she asked, while great tears slowly trickled down her cheeks.

"Ugh !" thought Tom ; "I've made a blunder." And he added aloud : "Oh, well, you know, Winnie told her directly she'd go to papa, and get her into trouble for it, and then Kathleen held her peace. But I wouldn't ask her all the same."

"If I were only sure ! You don't always know exactly what is right," said the child, glancing askance at the chimney, in which the doll had been burnt.

"Everything is right when it's done for the poor, don't you know that yet, child ? Don't you know that the Bible says that the right hand must not know what the left gives ?"

"Is that in the Bible ?"

"Yes ; ask your father if it isn't ; he knows all about the Bible."

"But shall I really forget it afterward?"

"Of course you will."

Minnie slowly left the room. Tom walked up and down, and stopped from time to time to listen. At last the small step was heard returning, and the child said gravely, opening her hand:

"I took it just as Maggie was doing my bed. She didn't see. But it is mine; so I had a right to take it, hadn't I?"

"Of course you had. Come, be quick. I must take it to Cardigan, if not further, and the poor woman can't wait."

He snatched it from her in such a hurry that the child fixed her big eyes gravely and inquiringly on his face, and he was fain to get away as fast as possible. He did not even thank the little one, but kissed her with a short, "Good-by, pussy," and ran down the terrace steps.

Minnie stood looking after him for a long while, and it occurred to her that she would have liked to give the poor woman the money herself.

"Did Kathleen beat you?" was her first question, when she met her sister.

"Oh, not much," said Winnie, blushing so deeply, however, that her eyes swam.

"Why?"

"Because I played on the harp. O, Minnie, you don't know, I've found Llewellyn's song. I know it quite well. I'll sing it you when nobody's by."

Edleen sat over her account-books again the whole of the morning, and only closed them and pretended to be writing letters, when she saw her husband and the vicar walking up and down the terrace past her windows.

"Of course," said Vaughan, standing still; "people again insist on shutting their eyes to what is evident to me. They think me an eccentric visionary when I declare that

the Suez Canal must be made. I immediately bought a great number of shares—I, who earned my money by hard work. One must do things in a grand way, say I. People will never see where they ought to invest money. I can show them, by calculations that a child would understand, that the proceeds will be tenfold, two hundred per cent., and more. And when I have talked myself hoarse and explained everything to them, they shake their heads and say: 'Vaughan is a dreamer.' Should I be wealthy now, if I had been a dreamer? No, I was far-sighted when a boy, and did many a profitable stroke of business for my father, when he was still a poor man. A dreamer, indeed! I cannot stand narrow-minded people. They have commerce with India and Australia as well as I have; they can see the map as well as I can. But they don't look at it—they don't calculate how much money time costs. I've no patience with them!"

The two gentlemen sauntered down to the garden, and Edleen opened her fatal books once more. She added up a whole page negligently, with intentional mistakes, jotted down the false sum and hastily wrote: Receipts, so much; and Expenditure, so much—below it—showing a large deficiency.

Then she drew a long breath of relief, and sat gazing at the word which had cost her several sleepless nights before she had soothed her conscience with the consideration that she was free to use her pin-money as she listed, and might cover the household expenses with what she saved from her toilet. Tom had been with her twice on the preceding day, tormenting her beyond endurance, and both times she had given him money. She felt as if her husband's stern eyes must see her heart throb through her dress. And that morning he had asked her: "Was Tom here?" and she

had hastily replied in the negative, before he could mention day or hour, so that her lie might seem less glaring. He had compressed his lips and kept silence, for he had seen Tom go away after cheating Minnie out of her little cross. His heart ached with the fear that his wife had lied to him, and yet he hoped she might really have been ignorant of her son's presence.

Edleen leaned back in her chair, staring at the accounts till her head swam, and she began dimly to wonder how she would appear to her stern, upright husband, with his vast, comprehensive mind, his bold thoughts, and his power over thousands of toiling men. Should she be the worm gnawing at his heart and cankering all his lofty aspirations? Would he ever crush her under his foot? A mist rose before her eyes.

A servant came in, bearing a card, and announcing a gentleman who wished to speak to her.

The man who entered the apartment was well dressed; he had a very sharp, pointed nose, dark eyes, remarkably close together, a high forehead, thin hair and beard, and a small, spare figure.

"I have not the pleasure——" began Mrs. Vaughan, rather stiffly, and in a low voice.

The stranger answered in a still lower key, as he bowed obsequiously:

"I am here on a trifling matter of business, and shall not keep you long. It is only that your son has drawn a few bills on your name, telling me I might get them cashed here at any time."

"Let me have them," said Edleen, with such cold dignity that the man quite cowered before her. She had turned her back upon him to conceal her sudden pallor, and rested her hand on the desk for a moment to steady herself.

Then she took out the money, thanking God that she had a sufficiently large sum in her keeping, and dismissed the stranger without another word.

When he was gone, and she heard her husband and the vicar's steps still quietly pacing the garden, she sank into a chair, pressing both hands on her heart, and panting, panting till her want of breath brought on a kind of a spasm, and she bit and tore her handkerchief in an agony of choking and coughing. By and by she picked up the card she had dropped on the carpet. The man's name was Roberts. That told her nothing. She tremblingly locked away the card, the account-books, the empty cash-boxes and purses, and walked up and down the room wringing her hands. Her breast was still oppressed; she lifted her hands to her throbbing temples, and dabbed her dry, burning eyes with the shreds of her handkerchief. What *should* she do? To whom *should* she turn?

The two gentlemen came in from the terrace, the vicar making some excuse for not having done so at first, and they sat down before the chimney to converse. Gwynne's quick eye soon discovered that his fair hostess was indisposed, and he rose to take his departure; but Vaughan, who had no wish to remain alone with her, and felt his heart tremble at the impending necessity of disclosures about Tom, detained him and kept him busy talking.

"Are you of opinion that one must save a human being at any cost, even at the risk of endangering others?" asked Vaughan suddenly.

The vicar slowly passed his hand across his lips. "There are many ways of saving a human being," he said. "On the whole, I am not very confident in this respect; my ex-

periences have not been favorable. I have made great sacrifices and generally repented of them afterward."

"But where are the bounds that one's charity should not exceed?"

"Ah, where? The Bible tells us we are to forgive *until seventy times seven*; and forgiving is the Christian's loveliest privilege, and the only one which lifts him above the brute creation, who know nothing but revenge."

"Ay, *until seventy times seven*!" exclaimed Edleen, clasping her trembling hands, and the two men felt their hearts melt in profound pity for the unhappy mother. Vaughan vowed to himself that he would keep silence and be patient, and the vicar thought this woman would not live much longer unless her son reformed. She had grown so transparent, her temples so weary, and the pupils of her eyes so large and feverish.

"And she does not know what tortures are still in store for her!" mused Gwynne, like an experienced physician prognosticating the process of some incurable disease. He saw that he had stayed long enough just then, and promised to call again soon.

"You feel tired and faint, Edleen; come and lie down a little," said Vaughan gently. He made her comfortable on the sofa and sat down with his newspapers at a distant window, some new enterprises soon absorbing his attention so completely that he forgot the presence of his wife. She lay still, torturing her brain and letting her eyes rove along the ceiling, while the paper rustled in Vaughan's hand.

"Money! Money! Money!" she thought, glancing toward her husband and shuddering at the idea of a confession to him. Anything rather than that. No, she could not bear the shame of calling upon him to pay her son's

extravagance. Then she remembered that she had jewelry, the ring with the rare stone on her finger, a diadem, fine pearls. Vaughan liked to deck his beautiful wife with costly ornaments. But how should she manage to prevent his finding out? She would consider that by and by. Only for to-day, for to-morrow, money and no scene.

"Didn't I say so?" exclaimed Vaughan, at the window. "Narrow-minded lot! What do a few millions of money signify? But they won't chance it. Can you understand how one can be so stingy, Edleen?"

"No," murmured his wife, turning the ring on her finger. "It is incomprehensible." She had not taken in the meaning of his question.

"The shares are at 500 to-day, but they will rise, rise to 5000, to 50,000, and the fools sit down and put sand in a sieve to see whether there's a grain of gold among it. I detest these shopkeepers."

"But you are generally so careful yourself."

"Careful! Of course I am careful where there's nothing to be got. But talent means the sagacity and boldness which insures success."

"Suppose I ask him," thought Edleen, studying a crevice in the ceiling.

"I am not a man to throw my money away; I can't stand caprices and foibles; I don't want to pay more for a loaf of sugar than it is worth, but I delight in grand and daring enterprise."

"No doubt," murmured Edleen; and she thought, "No, I cannot ask him! I cannot!"

"Talking of that, you must dismiss the housekeeper. There have been irregularities with the purchases, which have escaped your notice. I don't stand that kind of thing. She must leave the house by to-morrow."

"But, Harry!" The blood rushed to Edleen's face, and left it very white again. Those irregularities were nobody's fault but her own.

"If you will not tell her, I shall. You need only compare her books to yours to convince yourself that they are incorrect."

Edleen trembled. Did he know the real state of the case and want to punish her?

"Please understand that I wish to have order in my house."

"But—perhaps one might remonstrate with her this first time."

"Remonstrate!" exclaimed Vaughan impatiently. "You can't go and say to a person: 'Friend, you're dishonest!' and then continue your intercourse with her as if nothing had happened."

"Well, no; but perhaps one need not use such a strong expression."

"Why not? I call things by their names. Servants who are not fit for their work are dismissed, and there's an end of it. All my people know that. They must act accordingly."

"But you will not tell her she has been dishonest?"

"Why not?"

"Because it would be so cruel and would shut every door against her; and she has been with us so many years."

Edleen felt as if an inner voice were crying to her: "Be honest yourself, and save the poor woman!" But she could not. Her husband's stern eyes rested on her, immovably, as though their pupils had turned to stone. And she trembled before that look like a birch-leaf in the wind, and grew as cowardly as a dog at sight of the whip. She felt as if all her nerves must be shattered by it. She shared this fear

with all who had intercourse with him. His look made people quail, and took their breaths away like a searching east wind.

"Well, I will tell her," murmured Edleen, with dry lips. She wondered what she would do in future, with a stranger before whom she could not conceal or gloss over anything. How had Harry come to notice that there were irregularities? Had he examined the books? Had he spoken with baker and butcher? Or was he punishing *her* at this moment? Still those immovable eyes were upon her, before which she felt ready to sink into the ground. Thus God's eyes must rest upon the sinners on the day of judgment.

Vaughan thought: "If you are afraid of me, I will avail myself of your fear to save you from shame and misery, my poor wife! Your fear of me shall give you courage against that rascal, just as a boy learning to ride must be more afraid of his master's society than of his horse's tricks." And Vaughan watched his wife's face with a certain satisfaction. He had no idea how desperate her thoughts were, and how impossible it is to limit or quench a mother's affection, which only grows stronger in distress, and is a more unreasoning and dangerous passion than any other.

"I shall write to Lewes directly," he continued. "He must find us another housekeeper."

"Lewes!" thought Edleen. "True! There's Lewes. Owen frightened me so dreadfully that I saw no way of escape. But Lewes really could help me!"

Vaughan saw his wife's anxious features relax, and turned once more to his paper.

"No," mused Edleen. "I must not cause any more people misery. No one prospers who comes near me. I bring no luck!" Her lips trembled and a tear dropped from her lashes.

"Harry has but one thief in his house," she thought bitterly, "and that thief is his wife."

"I am so thirsty," she murmured.

Vaughan immediately jumped up, carefully prepared a glass of wine and water for her, and propped her head on his arm as she drank it. He saw that her temples were moist.

"Poor child, how frightened she has been!" he thought, as he gently kissed her brow and smoothed her hair; but then, fearing she might take advantage of this momentary weakness to make a request, he hastily resumed his seat at the window.

Edleen longed to be alone, but the newspaper seemed to be inexhaustible, and she was too confused to find a pretext for leaving the room.

"But one might give the poor soul a month's warning," she began, when the silence had lasted about half an hour.

"When I have said to-morrow, it is to-morrow. Haven't you learned that yet, Edleen?" he returned in his most cutting tone, impatiently crushed the paper in his hand, making her head and ears ache with its rustling, and strode out of the room—at last.

Mrs. Vaughan sprang to her feet and hurried upstairs. She found Kathleen alone, before her mirror, tying her hair with a red ribbon.

"Kathleen!" she said, "Kathleen dear! You must render me a great service this moment. Here! take this ring, drive to Cardigan, and sell it. The stone is worth hundreds of pounds, and I want hundreds, Kathleen—you know for whom, my love? And I know you will help me, and will understand my unpardonable weakness. Buy yourself a new hat, a very showy one, that people may see why you went to Cardigan."

Kathleen stood turning the ring in her fingers. Well, though she hated the faithless Tom, she could not desert Edleen in such anxiety and distress. She would not have done it for Tom's sake ; no, not to save him from going to prison. At this idea she softened, and quite forgot Temorah in thinking of Tom's pretty figure and merry voice. In that grave, stern house he was the only thing that brought life and light. And how proud she had been to him this morning ! How she had repulsed irresistible Tom ! Her satisfaction at her own behavior put her in quite a generous humor, and she resolved to take care of him in secret, while she pretended to scorn him to his face. This part greatly pleased her childish vanity, and embracing Edleen, she promised to extort heaps of gold from the jeweler.

But she was destined to make the sad experience that gold is rare at all times, but particularly so when one is in want of it. The jeweler laughed outright at her so greatly overrating the stone, and gave her much less than Edleen expected. She had very nearly taken the ring back with her again. But she thought of her cousin's anxious face and probable money difficulties. So she bought a very modest little hat, by way of not diminishing the sum any further, and came home in extremely low spirits.

Vaughan met her on the stairs, and teased her about her purchase, declaring he would have made a better choice if she had trusted him with the errand.

"Queer that such a beautiful young girl should not have better taste !"

"You don't say so ! is this all ?" exclaimed Edleen. "It would have been wiser to bring the stone back with you again."

"Shall I drive over and get it ?"

"No, no ! My God ! Certainly not ! Ah, money,

money ! Where am I to take it ? I can't suck it out of my fingers ! ”

Kathleen opened her drawer, and took out all her small savings. “ Here, Edleen, I don't want it, you know, if it can be any help to you.”

“ Your hardly earned money, child ! For it *is* hardly earned ! You don't like being with children. And mine are so uninteresting and stupid too. I think Tom got all the talent. There was nothing left for the others. Ah, what a child Tom was ! A genius, I tell you, a little paragon ! He spoke quite well at eighteen months old, he learned to read by himself before he was five. And his questions ; like a man's. The little ones never ask me anything. Poor Kathleen, how can I take this ? ”

“ It is for Tom,” said Kathleen, and a bitter smile played about her pretty mouth.

“ You love him, don't you ? ” asked Edleen, holding the money in her hand.

“ Oh, no ! ” A burning flush told Edleen that she had read her aright.

“ But my poor child, that cannot lead to anything.”

“ It need not. Shan't the children drive out a little now ? They make themselves so hot with running.”

“ How am I to thank you, Kathleen ? ”

“ Not at all, that's the simplest way. Who thinks of money ! ”

“ Ah, unfortunately they think a deal of it in this house. It has never been *my* way.”

Kathleen laughed. “ That's why we are such wonderful financiers. Money runs through our fingers, just as hair gets thin under an awkward hand, while a clever one makes it grow thick and glossy. With money it is the same thing. Look at the children ; it is almost incredible how far money

goes with them, what they can do with the few shillings they get ; it must be born with them."

" I don't like it," said Edleen.

" No, of course not ; it is not a sympathetic quality, but admirable and very useful all the same."

" Ah, very. Kathleen, who would have thought that we should be worse off with all this wealth around us than we were in our greatest poverty ? "

" When one is unlucky, one never prospers in anything. I am very superstitious and I don't believe in the possibility of happiness for myself, Edleen. I believe that I was born unlucky and, turn where I will, ill-luck stares me in the face."

" But, child, you are so beautiful ! "

" Of what use is that to me ? "

" And so lovable. One cannot help loving you."

" Is that happiness ? I don't see the use of it."

" It may lead to your becoming a good man's wife."

" I don't want to. What I see of matrimony does not make me anxious to run its chances."

" But to have children of one's own, Kathleen ! "

" I don't like children."

" Kathleen ! You used to say just the reverse."

" Did I ? Then it wasn't true. I often tell stories."

" But, Kathleen ! "

" Well, what's the matter ? I lie very often. I say I like a thing when I detest it, and I say I don't care about a thing when I'm dying to have it. I never tell myself the truth, just as I never look in a mirror unless I am quite sure of being very pretty."

" Then you are sure rather often," laughed Edleen.

" I look very rarely in a mirror."

" Only every time you come near one."

"You horror."

"Dear me, I think that quite natural. There are so few fine pictures here that one must make up for the want by looking-glasses."

"Thank you, Edleen," said the young girl, kissing her as she stood on the threshold. "No, come in again, Edleen ; it's unlucky to kiss in a door."

"Foolish child !"

"Yes, I know I am very foolish, more foolish than you can think."

"I prefer you to wise people."

"Very imprudent of you."

"And then I know you are fond of my Tom, and few people like him nowadays."

"You mistake. Everybody likes him."

"Dear child ! You said just now that you tell an untruth sometimes out of charity."

"No, I did not say that."

"I understood it so."

"You would be perfect if you were not Tom's mother, Edleen."

"And I was so proud of being that ; the only thing I was proud of in all my life."

"How proud I should be if I could tear him out of my heart," thought Kathleen, while her cousin glided downstairs to her desk, and breathed more freely when she had ascertained that the proceeds of her ring and Kathleen's savings would suffice to cover the deficit.

CHAPTER VII.

THE HERO OF THE DAY.

A DENSE crowd was gathered about the copper mine. The news of an accident had spread among the villages, and Vaughan was away in London. People kept pouring in from all directions, and the hum of agitated voices was audible at a great distance. All sorts of wild reports had circulated, nobody knowing who had first brought or spread them. The women pressed forward, agony in their eyes and the most terrible of questions on their lips.

At last it was known that there had been a slip in one of the galleries and that two men were buried.

"Who? Who?" was repeated from mouth to mouth. "Who'll go down and rescue them?" was the next question.

A momentary hesitation, ended by Tom's volunteering:

"I'll go, of course! I have neither wife nor child! What matter if I'm killed!"

This fine sentiment was received in silence; the moment was too grave for thinking of anything but the needed assistance.

Tom sprang into the tram and descended the shaft, accompanied by one of the miners. Ax in hand, coat and waistcoat cast aside in the stifling heat of the incumbered gallery, he went to work with stubborn fearlessness.

His example was followed by other volunteers, and whenever he took a moment's rest, he still encouraged them by his confident air and hearty words. They labored day and night, fresh shifts relieving the weary ones; and the work went on with redoubled vigor since faint tappings had been heard from within. Tom only went up for a few minutes

at a time to breathe the air, and then again descended before the eyes of the admiring crowd. By and by he took Toby's wife and Will's motherless little girl down with him for a moment, to let them speak to their dear ones, and push bread through the holes the rescuers had bored in the fallen earth. Tom seemed to direct everything. He slept only as he stood, leaning against the side of the gallery, still grasping the ax in his hand. He exhorted the sufferers to keep up their courage, and prayed with them when they felt death draw nigh.

All this was reported to Edleen as well as to Vaughan, whom the news of the disaster had immediately caused to return.

Edleen was radiant. "He is not quite lost, then," she said. "He is a good fellow at bottom, isn't he, Harry? Don't you think he may still grow to be a worthy man?"

Vaughan smiled sadly. He knew that short-lived enthusiasm, consisting chiefly of vanity and vain-glory, of pleasure in novelty and nervous excitement.

One early morning Temorah was also seen near the shaft, where she had stood unnoticed during the night. She was crying. The women nudged each other. "She's thinking of her father, who perished that way!" they whispered.

She had sat down on a heap of stones, and taken Will's little girl in her lap. She comforted the child with gentle words; and Toby's wife crept to her side, wailing and rocking herself to and fro in her distress.

The fog lay heavy on land and sea, and grew so dense before sunrise that one could hardly breathe without coughing, and the nearest objects faded out of sight. The bleak, bare landscape was steeped in moisture. There was a sound of dripping and rippling on the air that blent dismally with the noisy echoes from below. As the dawn

broke, the day-shift went down the mine and the night-shift came up; Tom was not among them. He had remained below, and food was taken down to him.

"That's my Tom, after all!" thought Temorah.

On the fourth day the voices of the sufferers grew so weak that the rescuers began to fear they would not reach them in time. The groups around the shaft-head grew more pitiful in the thick fog, which covered them like a heavy shroud, and would not dissolve. People no longer recognized each other; every approaching figure looked gigantic, and the few words that were exchanged set small clouds whirling before the speakers' mouths. Clothes steamed, shoes soaked in the deep mud; faces were white and drawn, eyes haggard, and lips blue. Toby's wife cowered close to the shaft-head, whispering endless prayers; she could not even cry any more. Will's little daughter had put her hand in an old miner's and stood sighing softly and staring at the ground with dilated eyes. Hours rolled by. The dull sound of axes and shovels, the rumbling of falling earth, and the hoarse cries of the workmen, rose unintermittingly from the mine. Suddenly the signal to hoist was given. A few more seconds of suspense, and Tom was among them, pale, soiled, with disheveled hair and torn shirt. "They are saved!" he cried, at the top of his voice. Then Toby's wife fell senseless at his feet. "Who thought of bringing brandy? Brandy!" he exclaimed impatiently, stamping his foot.

"Here," said Temorah, taking a pitcher from under her cloak. Tom snatched it from her, and turned to descend once more.

Temorah busied herself with Toby's wife, and presently succeeded in reviving her.

When the rescued were brought out into the open air at

last, they could hardly be recognized for Will and Toby, and gave but very faint signs of life ; slowly, slowly their blood began to circulate again, and while the usual means of reanimation were being applied to them, Tom was seen gesticulating among the groups, telling how he had worked day and night, how he had sometimes fallen asleep between two strokes, how the fragments of fallen rock which obstructed the narrow gallery had suddenly given way, and the two senseless bodies had fallen into his arms amid a shower of loose earth and stones. He had thought them dead at first, and would have been borne to the ground by their weight, if his companions had not rushed to his assistance. Vaughan stood near him unobserved, and listened in silence ; but old Owen, who had at first been wholly occupied with the sufferers, could not bear to hear him talking in this strain ; he laid his hand on the young man's shoulder and asked him whether he would not go to wash or dress.

"Oh, yes, certainly," laughed Tom. "I look like a chimney-sweeper, and I'm hungry and thirsty, especially thirsty. I always gave the men my share of the refreshments to keep them in good spirits."

"And how did you keep yourself alive ? And where are your clothes ?" asked the old man.

"I covered those two with my clothes. They were so cold. I'm quite warm, and I shall run home as soon as I know the poor fellows are really alive. It would be a pity if they were to die after all, in spite of all our trouble."

He stepped to the side of the stretchers on which Toby and Will were being carried away. Toby's wife fell on her knees before him and covered his hands with kisses. Seeing this, Will's child knelt down beside her on the dirty ground. He took the little girl in his arms and kissed her.

"You shall not lose your father," he said loudly and emphatically.

"Three cheers for our Tom!" cried one of the miners, and a thousand voices took up the cry; the hurrahs rose tumultuously into the air, and then there was a whisper among the workmen, and before Tom could guess their intention, he was raised on their shoulders and borne along in triumph. A great multitude moved through the fog toward Vaughan's house; children ran on in front, and a chorus was quickly formed, bursting into noisy song. The men took it by turns to carry Tom, lifting him high from time to time, that the people might see him better. He sat with his arms crossed on his breast, as though his dirty shirt were a royal robe. The vicar's sons came out to meet him, waving their caps. The fog seemed to dissolve before the advancing crowd, so that Edleen could see them from her window. Her mother's heart beat high with exultant pride, especially when Tom made a speech to them, which was continually interrupted by joyful acclamations. Regardless of his depredations, she folded her son in her trembling arms, and whispered words to him such as only a glad and anxious mother can utter. Her prodigal son was the hero of the day, honored and loved by all, a friend and benefactor of his fellow-men.

Kathleen and the little girls immediately drove over to the cottages of the sufferers with warm clothes, food, and wine, and were also cheered by the home-bound workmen. In the evening a fiery serpent was seen winding through the hilly woodland. It was an immense torchlight procession in honor of Tom, and Vaughan's cellar was made to contribute largely to the general elation. Numberless speeches were made. Tom enjoyed his heroship to the utmost, talking incessantly; and every time he repeated

his adventures, the days and nights of suspense grew longer, the air in the gallery more stifling, the recovered bodies more dead and only restored to life by his art and energy ; but tell what he might, people believed him implicitly that evening ; his version even became the popular one, and the very eye-witnesses declared Tom's reports to be accurate. It was a night of rejoicing, singing, intoxication, and merriment.

Edleen looked like a bride, so rosy and radiant as though all care and pain were forgotten and her darling must become a new man from that hour—a good man, whom people would always admire, whom they would extol and raise in their arms on many another occasion, the son of whom she had dreamt when she hushed him on her breast in his baby days, when she prayed the Almighty to spare his life, and thought she must die if he were snatched from her. “Tom !” she said several times, and Vaughan felt that she had neither look nor feeling for him that evening. She was nothing but Tom's happy mother, and would drain her cup of joy to the very dregs. The fog had cleared away completely ; the moonlight glittered on the sea, and made the torches look murky, with their lurid glare and their heavy smoke rolling low in the moist air. Even when the last were thrown on a heap to make a bonfire, around which the revelers danced, the moon maintained her superiority and shown in calm magnificence. And the sea murmured dreamily, drowning the hoarse voices and Tom's incoherent speeches, which continued to influence the general enthusiasm as much as did the wine, beer, and brandy.

Tom was so extremely attentive to his mother the whole evening that he gained the sympathy of all unsophisticated minds. He did not take the slightest notice of Vaughan and Kathleen, and called out imperiously to old Owen, why

the beer was so scarce over there, among the elder workmen? Then he summoned a servant and gave him a purse full of money for Toby and Will, thereby evoking a new volley of applause. Kathleen looked after the purse, and thought: "How shall we pay that?" Edleen was too happy for even this consideration to occur to her.

In a small dark room, Temorah sat by Toby's bed and fancied more than once that night that he would not live to see another day. His wife lay faint and helpless beside him; the terror of the past days had exhausted her strength. Toby repeatedly lifted his bloodless hand to stroke her cheek, and once or twice he whispered words of gratitude to Temorah. Toward morning he sank into such a deep sleep that he did not hear a first weak cry quiver through the room, and then lapse into silence for ever. By and by, a tiny coffin was borne from the house, and during several days there seemed little hope of saving the poor mother's life.

While the rescuer was heaped with applause, the rescued fought a terrible fight; it was just as if death would not surrender his prey.

Will was extremely weak; he felt life ebbing from him, and himself sinking down into something unbounded, into unfathomable depths. Then he heard his child's despairing cry, reaching him as from a vast distance: "Father, father! Father dear! Come back, father!" and with an immense effort of will he returned all that long way, opened his eyes and recognized his child. And so he was saved.

Temorah sat at the bedside, envying Toby's wife for her baby's death, and wondering what would become of herself. Tom's munificent gift to the sufferers had come. He had never asked how *she* would manage to live, he never came near her now. Bitter, bitter were Temorah's thoughts,

while she watched and recalled to life and happiness what was so desirous of living and being happy. She was revered like an angel in that humble home. And yet she felt sure that they would turn from her in scorn, if they knew.

At last she was able to go home and rest. She had scarcely stretched her weary limbs upon her bed, when she heard a tap at her window. She held her breath in terror and did not move. Who knocked? Who wanted to see her?

Then so deep a voice rose outside, that she did not know at first whether it was a man's or a woman's. "Will you not let me in? I mean you no harm, poor maiden."

Who could it be? Temorah approached the window and started back in dismay. It was Ulla, the witch, the terror of all the country round; Ulla, the noseless monster, the uncanny simpler and fortune-teller, who had power over fire and tempest, health and sickness, luck and evil fortune.

"Let me in," said the old woman. "Only happy people close their doors against me. The unhappy let me in."

"I am not unhappy, and want nothing," Temorah forced herself to say.

"Since you bar your door there is no happiness under your roof; you are hiding a wrong, my child."

The moon shone full on Temorah as she stood there with white face and chattering teeth.

"Open, Temorah; I have to tell you something that would wake the flowers from their sleep, that the moon must not hear."

"I will not listen. I want to sleep."

"You cannot sleep for misery," said the witch, bending in at the window, so that Temorah retreated a step or two.

"Who told you that? You don't know me; you never saw me before."

"I see everybody, also those who do not see me; I see them sleeping and waking, whenever I list; I see them sinning and suffering, in the mirrored wave, in the glowing fire; nothing is hidden from my sight. Let me in. Your door was open to worse than me!"

Temorah put her hand to her heart, and unbarred the door with trembling fingers.

"Have you no cordial for me? I am thirsty," said the terrible woman, beating her staff upon the kitchen flags.

"There's milk," murmured Temorah.

The old woman laid her bony fingers on Temorah's hand to detain her.

"No, no milk; old people need warm drink; you will not repent your hospitality, for I bring you help and comfort?"

"Me!"

"Ay, you; I bring you something, else I had not come."

"No one need bring me anything; I accept no charity."

The old woman laughed.

"I know you do not. That is why I begin with begging something myself."

"But I have no brandy."

"Oh, yes, you have. Go and look! I clearly saw a bottle in your cellar, in the left-hand corner, behind the empty barrel."

Temorah trembled again. She took a light, descended to the cellar, and found the bottle where the old woman had seen it.

"A good drop," said Ulla, smacking her lips. "Fill the glass again, child. It comforts my cold heart. I could almost love a fellow-creature now, and that has not happened to me this long while."

"Have you ever loved anybody?"

The wrinkled eyes flashed a strange look at Temorah.

"I have been beautiful in my day, child; much more beautiful than you are, and have loved, even more passionately than you have loved, and have grown as unhappy as you will grow, estranged from mankind and shunned by them. I see you wander among them like one from the grave, Temorah. And, therefore, I come to help you before it is too late."

"You cannot help me."

"Oh, yes, I can. Old Ulla can do anything." She bent forward and whispered in Temorah's ear.

The girl started to her feet and stood before her, tall and deadly white.

"Never! Never! Go, and never come near me again!"

"No one would know," said Ulla, watching her.

"God would!" whispered Temorah.

"God knows much and suffers it to happen; his forbearance goes a long way, believe me."

"Alas for us, when it is exhausted!"

"You are foolish. Could you not tell yourself sooner: 'God sees me!' instead of now, when it is too late! Foolish girl! Foolish girl!"

"What I thought or did not think is nobody's concern but mine."

"So proud, so very proud!"

"What remains to me but my pride?"

"Shame!"

Temorah shivered like a tree in the autumn wind.

"I mean no harm. I would but help you to elude the malice of your fellow-creatures."

"What are they to me?"

"Do without them, my child, as I have done! Try to do

without them ; they will not leave you alone. No forest, no ravine is distant and dark enough ; they seek you out and make use of you, and then cast you off in disgust."

"I want no pity."

"And yet you sat here moaning and wailing : 'Can no one help me ?' And now I am come, you reject my aid."

"Yes, I do reject *such* aid."

"Perhaps you fancy he will come and restore your honor ?" The old woman burst into a horrible laugh.

"No, I don't. I want him as little as anybody else," returned Temorah, staring at the ground.

"And you will find yourself food quite alone ?"

"Quite alone."

"And clothes ?"

"I can spin and weave as well as sew."

"In daytime for others, at night for yourself."

"Well, yes, at night for myself. Many people work at night."

"You will be very miserable, Temorah. Believe me, I see you."

"Maybe you see aright. But I am not afraid."

"And yet you tremble."

"That is only like water when the wind passes over it. Beneath the surface all is calm—as calm as death."

"Foolish girl."

"Ah, yes, I have been very foolish."

"And you are so still. Love is sweet, love is beautiful, but it is no light thing for us women. It weighs us to the ground."

"An unjust order of things," sighed Temorah.

"Ay, ay, a delight to men, and a torture—a torture to us."

"And then it passes."

"Indeed, does it pass?" said Ulla, with a curious glance.

Temorah felt that shiver stealing over her again.

"Well, I mean one cannot go on loving so dearly when—when——"

"You need not excuse your feeling so, not at all. I know all that better than you, for I have known it longer. But let me tell you, love does not pass; it only calls itself by another name, and that name is *hate*. That is how it calls itself; but it is always the same old, stupid passion, which awakes, and blooms again and again, like the lilies of the valley, sprouting from rotten leaves, with all its wild, intoxicating fragrance."

Temorah looked in surprise at the old woman, whose thoughts seemed to roam among distant scenes; but her appearance—the deep pock-marks disfiguring her very lips and eyelids, her destroyed nose, everything renewed the feeling of horror she was accustomed to inspire, and dimmed the effect of her words.

"I shall go now," she began, after a while. "I shall go. And by and by you will weep and wail and repent of having suffered me to depart, of having been too proud to accept my aid. Why are you so timid, foolish maiden?"

"I can bear my fate," said Temorah, biting her lip.

"No, you cannot, and I know that you cannot. Ay, ay, you think yourself as strong, as sturdy as a man. But you are not, Temorah. Your enemies are stronger than you. Beware of a sudden shock, child, beware of a shock!"

The staff sounded on the floor as the old woman departed, and Temorah stood in a kind of trance, listening to the retreating footsteps until they were lost in the distance, and all was still. Then she sank upon the floor and moaned like some dumb creature in pain, and struggled for

breath, cursing herself and Tom, and giving way to such despair as only a strong soul can feel, when it falls a prey to stormy passion and misery. She struck her head against the wall, and rolled it to and fro, finding something like rest in the regular motion.

"I am so unhappy," she moaned. "I am so unhappy ! O God ! I am so unhappy !"

In love, as in happiness, man generally finds but one word, which he repeats in every possible gradation of emphasis.

Thus she sat till daybreak, in hot rebellion against the implacability of life, helpless, disconsolate, as neglected as some forgotten grave, as lonely as only the unhappy can be, though they were robed in purple and surrounded by admiring crowds. She felt as if she must conceal herself from the early glimmer of day ; so she rose at last, crept into her bed, and shut the door upon herself. And not feeling sufficiently hidden even then, she drew the coverlet over her head, and lay with a beating heart and burning cheeks. She felt so nerveless to-day, so unfit to play her part before others, that she began to consider whether she had not bread enough at home for this one day. No, she had not enough to appease her hunger ; but still she would not go out to her work just yet. Not just yet ! Oh, no ! She must have peace for one hour at least ! And then weakness and exhaustion merged into slumber, broken by feverish dreams. She dreamt that Tom came toward her with torches in his hands, and she cried : "Take care, Tom, you'll burn my cottage." But Tom laughed, and said : "I am a hero ! I'll give you a palace instead of your cottage. But take the child away ; I hate children. And wed another man, for *I* am a hero. Love is nothing to me ! You are foolish, Temorah ! I told you that I loved you,

and you believed me." And as he spoke he cast the torches into the house, and it stood one mass of roaring fire and flame. With a cry upon her lips Temorah awoke. But there was only a sunbeam stealing through the door, and gilding the wainscot above her bed. She often dreamed of fire and of an unbearable light in her head, and then she used to be so tired afterward, as if she had watched through several nights. At such times she was also gifted with second sight, and saw what was passing at a great distance. Thus she saw Tom at present, going to Kathleen, putting his arm around her and kissing her. She saw, too, how Kathleen pushed him away, and how he coaxed her and whispered soft words, and finally drew her upon his knee. And Kathleen hung her head and tried to look angry, and laughed in spite of herself; he kissed her again, and then he begged something of her, and she took a pretty cross, with shining, red stones, from her throat—ah! how they sparkled! Their sparkling hurt Temorah so much, quite deep in the back of her head. Tom took the cross, and laughed, and kissed Kathleen once more. Temorah felt as if she must cry out loud; but just then he jumped up and ran away, and Kathleen looked after him from the window.

The unbearable light still shone in Temorah's head. Now she fancied her mother came in and softly opened the doors of her bed, and lifted her finger reproachfully, and looked down upon her with heavenly pity. Temorah trembled at her look, and would have stretched out her arms, but her mother motioned her back, and lifted her hand once more, and disappeared. And Temorah wept bitterly, until her head grew dark and her tongue and lips were parched with heat.

Then she rose, and greedily drank all the milk that was

left in the house. When she stood on her feet again, her courage revived. And when the fresh morning air had cooled her eyes and cheeks, no one would have guessed what a terrible night she had just gone through.

CHAPTER VIII.

LLEWELLYN'S THOUGHTS.

ON a high rock, under rustling, golden-leaved trees sat Llewellyn, and looked far across the sea, whose glittering crests were rushing and hurrying landward. The fast-sailing clouds flung their shifting shadows upon it, steeping it in dark green or gray, while the sunbeams shot down behind them, and called forth bright reflections from the waves. And the tide rolled on, restlessly rearing its huge billows as though it must swallow up the land. The swift shadows also flew across the trees, as they stood shivering and struggling against the storm, strewing their charming finery upon the earth, who wrapped herself in its soft folds, and thought dreamily of the springtide.

Llewellyn's hand played with his long, white beard, and his eyes saw naught but the ideal world within him. A wonderful change passed over his features, the clouds upon them fading before sudden sunshine, as though the gray years were rolled away by the storm, to make room for radiant juvenility. His cheeks grew flushed, his forehead smooth and rosy; his white locks waved about in the wind like snowy moss, and his nostrils quivered as with the breathings of youthful passion. His face seemed to grow more delicate and transparent every moment, and an inner light broke from the depths of his eyes. Those stormy autumn days fire the poet's soul with wonderful fancies. There is a rushing and raging in his mind as of some new

element springing into existence, a fermenting of unknown powers, a suffering of thoughts, against which he rebels in vain.

"One might as well try to prevent an eruption of the Hecla," murmured Llewellyn, contracting his powerful brows, till they shaded his eyes as copse-wood shades a deep lake. "I will not. I need not. Have I not former songs in plenty? Why will a new one press into my brain?"

Memories crowded upon him like hosts of specters, and his heart grew so sorrowful that he felt as if he could weep as young people do. In his hours of creation the poet is but another Jacob, wrestling with an angel. The rushing of his angel's wings was well known to Llewellyn, but it always seemed to him like a fiend's immersing him in hellish fire. For angel and fiend told him with mocking laughter, that he was naught, and all he had hitherto composed but so much air, unworthy of being sung. "I know it—I know it," groaned Llewellyn. "I have lived all my long life in vain. I have sung trash to the people, and never delighted them—never!" The shadow of a cloud drifted across him, and the storm roared exultingly, as though it were achieving great feats.

"Ah, yes," said Llewellyn, "I see the vision clearly. She has golden hair and a distaff, and spins. Why *does* she spin so long?" The sun shone out again, and the leaves fluttered about in his light, as if they were at play and had no thought of dying.

"This is the spot where we met in days of yore, Ulla and I." At that name a wave of blood swept up to the minstrel's brow. "She was as beautiful as song, with great black eyes, deep as an abyss; oh, yes, she was like an abyss, and her hair resembled these leaves, brown and

golden and shining, and so sweetly fragrant—fragrant as moss—no, as blooming heather. And it curled about her neck—how it curled ! I loved to see those tiny ringlets. And then her nose ! Her nose was so beautiful that I could have lain on the ground for hours looking up at her profile. And how it moved when she spoke ! And her voice !” The bard started to his feet, and strode to and fro, and dropped wearily down once more upon his rocky seat.

“I shall hear that voice in my very grave ! It was like the voice that wanders among the strings of a harp, and that no harper’s hand can ever reach or stay—winning and playful, tender and coy, rising high and sinking low.

Like the wailing of breezes and echoing mountains,
Like fluttering leaves on a summer-green tree,
Like the thrilling of chords and the rippling of fountains—
As though the bright beams of the sun sang a glee.
’Twas a voice that resembled the bird’s in its gladness,
That flashed thro’ the air like a glittering blade,
That throbbed in my bosom and banished my sadness

“No, not so, nonsense ! And yet it throbs in one’s breast ; it throbs, and one’s eyes grow dim, and one must kiss the lips from which the charming sound has come. I did kiss those lips, ah, how I kissed them ! Here, under this tree. Here I knelt in the moss beside her, and she wound her arms around my neck, and said : ‘Your eyes are a lake that I will drink with mine, for mine are burning coals, and no lake can quench their fire. Do you feel how hot they are ?’ Oh, yes, Heaven knows. So hot ! I feel them still !”

He rose again, and wandered about, and leaned against the tree, putting his arms around it, and laying his forehead against it, while his temples throbbed visibly.

“The other, the vision, spins ; what does she want with

me? I will think of Ulla. I came here to think of Ulla. I will not, I will not sing. I will think of Ulla.

“‘Is eternity long?’ she asked me, in those days.

“‘Eternity is like a kiss; like this, do you see?’

“‘Then it is too short for me and my love.’

“Ah, yes, eternity,” Llewellyn groaned aloud. “I am nothing. I am nothing at all; no man of honor, no minstrel, no hero, no sage, no father, and no friend. I am nothing.”

The tree tossed its branches and moaned in the roaring storm, and its leaves fluttered down on Llewellyn's hair and cloak.

“She is spinning for somebody, out of love. I see her clearly in the moonshine; I see the battlements of her castle. Down below heaves the sea, and she often looks round and bends to listen. I will not. It will not be worth anything after all. I cannot make a real song. Ah, if I were a painter it would be different. Had I been a painter, I should have painted Ulla, before—before—ah, well!” His strong frame shook like the tree against which he was leaning. He quitted his hold upon it and sat down again, smiting his knees in the torture of his thoughts. Then he began to sing under his breath. The storm thundered and howled. He did not hear. The sea rose threateningly. He saw it not. He sang in a low, deep voice, and broke off, and sang on again.

Nor wealth nor splendor would I own,
I care not to be loved or known,
And when I die, I'll die alone,

As dies a forest tree.

My life is like dissolving foam—
No bliss for me, as on I roam!
No wife or child on hearth or home!

'Tis all a dream to me

He rose and looked absently for his harp. He had leaned it against a tree, and it sounded from time to time in the rushing of the wind, as if it were itself in distress, and longing for the rescuing hand which could free its harmonious soul. But Llewellyn had already forgotten that he wanted it.

"My loneliness could touch the very rocks," he murmured. "The very rocks might respond to my woe as they do to the storm. But they would only forget me again, as they forget the tempest. It is the same with everything; the whole world is but an echo. Storm, and it storms; laugh, and it laughs—and forgets you before you have turned your back. The minstrel is but a power of nature and a mirror in its eyes. I will not. Thou shalt not beguile me, spinning maid! For whom *does* she spin? She loves—she loves one down below in the dungeon—and spins and weeps because her store of flax is exhausted, and entreats the moon to give her beams of silver light to spin instead of flax. Was it my fault that I fainted when I saw Ulla again, pock-pitted, disfigured, noseless, so horrible—horrible! What had I done? And she, what had she done to deserve that? We had loved, ah me!—what a sin! A sin before men, a great wrong; but a sacred law of nature, my sacred right! She was mine. She would be mine. She would no more possess a soul of her own than the harp which owes its soul to my fingers. And when I sank under that weight of horror, her beautiful hair turned gray in a single night, and she fled away from men; and I, coward that I was, I did not follow her, I did not seek her out. Perhaps she died. I know not. But on stormy days my old love awakes again; it thrills me from head to foot; I see her vividly before me again, with her magnificent beauty, her golden voice." The old man rent his hair, and great

drops of agony stood on his brow. "I am cold," he said, suddenly; "I am as cold as if I had long been laid in my grave!" He drew his cloak more tightly about him and again began to sing to himself.

She is so pale as through the night
She swiftly hurries on.
What draws she from her mantle's folds?
Is it some magic web she holds
For the moon to shine upon?

What draws she from her mantle's folds,
Upon the river side?
What is the treasure that she brings?
What is the gleaming thing she flings
Into the gloomy tide?

Her mantle's folds are empty now;
She turns in pain and dread.
The river asks: "What gleams so white?
What bear I through the silent night?
A thing alive or dead?"

The river rolls like hopeless tears
That flow at fate's decree;
It sadly seeks the distant bay;
The small white bundle floats away
In silence to the sea.

"What is it?" asks the ruthless sea;
"A web of magic might?"
The river sighs: "She brought it down—
A noble dame in costly gown—
'Tis mute and cold and white."

"Full many dames with faces pale,
And many knights, I trow,"
Replies the sea, "I bury deep
Within my caves, and do not weep
To see them laid so low."

"Alas ! it is a sadder sight
Than dame or knight can be—
It is an infant !" moans the stream—
The moon looks down with trembling beam
Upon the weeping sea

He stared at the ground as he sang, with the terrible question, which he had not dared to ask during all his long life, written on his brow. The lay his lips were breathing was but an echo of that burning question. "If the child were alive I should know it ! Impossible ! But she was in despair, and her hair was white, and what will a woman not do when she is driven to despair."

Again those heavy drops gathered on the bard's brow, and again he drew his cloak more tightly about him. He did not notice that a form was standing close behind him, looking fixedly at him ; a female form, wrapped in a long, black cloak, with her face muffled up in a kerchief. Only the wrinkled eyes that had watched Temorah so curiously seemed to live in all the strange apparition.

"Ulla !" whispered the bard to himself. "Ulla, I have loved thee. Ulla, hast thou killed my child ? The child of our great love ? No, thou hast not, hast thou ? But her hair turned gray in a single night. And she never showed herself again. She was in despair. And I left her to despair, wretch that I was ! Ulla, art thou dead ? Be dead ! be dead since ever so long, that I may rest at last !"

The black figure glided past him through the storm, and wandered away among the trees, frequently stopping and looking back. He knew not. He had not heard her step, nor felt her presence, but she had stilled her heart and satisfied her eyes. She stopped again and looked back. He was still the wondrously handsome Llewellyn with his child-like eyes, and his golden mouth, that was fain to sing and

tell the truth because it was disclosed to him. He often told it, even before he himself knew what it was that he betrayed. And Ulla fancied she felt the small burden under her mantle still, and saw the little white face in the water, beneath the moonshine.

"Always the same Llewellyn," she murmured, clenching her hand. "I do not grudge him this hour of torment and repentance. May he find it as long as perdition."

She turned once more and waved her arm at him. Llewellyn gnashed his teeth and smote his breast.

"I suffer!" he thought, and deep lines gathered about his mouth. A leaf floated slowly down before his eyes. He caught and crushed it in his hand. "Such is my life to me. A green leaf, a dry leaf, and dust. Why do I sing to divert the people? Was I born a jester? Am I a river, collecting floods of tears, and bearing them to the sea? I plow the ocean; my furrows are swept away as I go, and bear no grain, and if they phosphoresce at times, the light is not mine. I shall be as thoroughly forgotten as the wave—the wave is forgotten, though it had borne and shattered a leviathan; for it is not its own doing. It is not my doing that I must bear those songs of mine; and yet I stand apart; I wander past the cheerful hearth; I do but approach men's hearts like the rising wind—when I have passed, I am forgotten. And I plod on through the world, weighed down by my thoughts, dragging with me the fearful question which I have asked of none, and which none can answer. There she is again, the spinning maid. Hence! I will think of Ulla. I did not come hither to find a song, but my love—my great past love. But a minstrel's love is like a ray of light. It wanders, and cannot stay. Beautiful women loved me. I loved them no longer, for I saw the ugly skeletons under their beauty and the erring souls

within. I looked them through and through. I saw them sick and wicked, destroyed and destroying. I thought of the noseless woman whom I had loved because she was beautiful—and love itself seemed false and untrue. All is worthless when love itself is naught—love, which seems so powerful! There she is again—the spinning maiden, and will not let me rest. What *is* she spinning in the moon-shine? I cannot see it clearly. Nay, but I see! O God, how beautiful! A master-thought! I have my song! Hush, hush, do not rustle, wind! I have another rhythm. I have a wonderous lay. Hark! Hush! my song!" A supernatural radiance shone on his face, which had been so gloomy a moment before.

"That is a song worth singing, a song full of the prime power of love. Ah, whence did I take its joy? For I am faint unto death. I never felt such mortal agony. And then, I forgot my harp. Where did I leave my harp?"

At that moment a faint sound of vibrating chords floated on the air. In his state of nervous excitement, it acted like a shrill cry on Llewellyn. He started as if a tree had fallen near him, and then he smiled at himself, when he laid his trembling hand on his harp and saw that it was near and safe and had but answered his call.

"Ah, yes, thou answerest me," he said, taking it tenderly in his arm. "Sweet harp! Thou and I, we two, we will conquer the world! We will soar above it, sweet harp." He caressed it. "Come, be good, be great, and help me to sing—I am so weary." His hand sank down at his side; he bowed his head and leaned his brow against his harp, whose chords continued to vibrate in the wind, close to his ear. Llewellyn suffered the sounds to lull his soul to sleep, after the storm that had shaken it. A great stillness came over him; his head grew heavy and his breast so calm as

though it had forgotten to breathe. And in this dreamy state he saw the figures of his ballad rise before him in palpable reality. He saw their every movement. He heard the sound of their voices. His own self no longer existed for him. He no longer felt the storm, he saw nothing but his own fancies, and listened, half-unconsciously, to the murmuring sounds that seemed to encourage him. From time to time the storm abated. Then he felt as if a delicate hand or soft lips touched his brow. But suddenly he started up, his heart bounded and beat high in his breast, his hands grew ice-cold, his cheeks flushed, his eyes flashed and glowed, and the song flowed from his lips and hands, like red-hot metal pouring in liquid splendor from the glowing furnace, exultant, free for a moment, and hissing and struggling impatiently against the new restraint of the waiting mold. It seemed as if the storm paused in its fury to listen to the song, as if all nature throbbed with the pulsation of the poet who had caught and absorbed wind and sunshine, shade and light. Nature was strong in *him* at that hour, swaying all with elementary power, bent on creating.

Her garments white like silver shone,
Her hair like liquid gold ;
Around her form its sunny waves
In many a ringlet rolled.

And when the minstrel saw the maid,
She took his heart away.
And when her violet eyes grew dim,
It was his happiest day.

And when the first impassioned kiss
From trembling lips he took,
It thrilled his soul with lightning flash,
And all his being shook.

And when with her caressing voice
She said : " I love thee well ! "
The world grew splendid in his sight,
As by a magic spell.

He bowed his face upon her lap,
Half hidden by her hair,
The roses whispering in the grove,
His bliss too great to bear.

A heavy tread—an iron grasp—
A cry the silence rent—
" Ho, warders, seize him ! To the keep ! "
" My father, stay ! Relent ! "

" I will forget him from this hour,
He shall be dead to me ;
But let my love depart unharmed
In peace across the sea ! "

" Thy love shall die in dungeon gloom,
Shall die a death of shame,
Shall answer with his caitiff life
The blot upon thy fame. "

" Let *me* atone instead of him !
Oh, pity my despair !
I will endure thy worst decree,
But grant my humble prayer ! "

" So be it—while thy fingers spin
The thread, by night and day,
Thy lover shall escape his doom
And live as live he may.

" But if thy distaff once be bare,
If once thy hand grow lame ;
Thy comely fee shall meet his fate
And die a death of shame. "

She flew to take the distaff straight,
And spun till evening gray,
And spun at night by moonlight pale,
And spun at break of day.

She came and leant above the keep,
And spun her fingers sore.
“Now keep me well awake, my love,
With golden minstrel-lore.”

Then rose the captive's voice in song,
A sweet and stirring sound.
The maiden spun with bleeding hands,
Her sire looked on and frowned :

“Eight nights and days thy distaff flew,
I will not have thee die ;
Thou needs must rest, for thou shalt find
No flax now, far and nigh.”

No flax ! She wept in wild dismay ;
Her store was thinning fast ;
She drew her thread like spider's web,
But yet it would not last.

“Now cease, my love, and sing no more,
My flax is spun to-night ;
And thou must die for loving me,
Before the east is bright.”

But when the morning crost the sea,
He saw a pallid child,
Unknown and yet familiar too,
Who wept, and spun, and smiled :

Her little head was closely clipt,
Her violet eyes were bright :
“I cut my locks to spin for thee ;
They'll last me many a night.”

And when her sire beheld that flax,
With melting heart he spake :
“ My warders, loose the captive’s chain !
I’ll free him for her sake.
“ And he shall wed her, if a bride
Thus marred he list to woo ;
And what a foolish maiden wills,
One must submit unto.”

The ballad closed triumphantly with a sonorous chord, and Llewellyn sat smiling in the sunshine, happy as a child, repeating some of the strophes, and changing word or melody here and there. The storm was over, and the sounds floated slowly through the listening forest, while Llewellyn whispered, “ My first good song ! To whom shall I sing it ? I must sing it to some one ; I cannot bear it else ! ” He did not know that a forlorn woman was hiding near at hand, and weeping behind her cloak, as if her heart would break.

“ All spirits hover around him,” she sobbed. “ And he is young and handsome still, and a great minstrel ! And he knows it ! How radiant his face is ! How his white teeth flash in the sun ! All his torture is over like the storm. Free, and rich, and happy, as though the world were his to give. Ah, he was always a king, and will always be one ! ”

And the poor woman wept, as if her tears could quench the glowing embers of her soul, which every glance at him fanned into flame again. She saw him rise, and tenderly cover up his harp, before he bore it away. He might have been wrapping a beloved wife in a soft shawl, so gently did his eyes rest on the harp, so tenderly did he handle it. Then he let his eyes rove around, as if he would take a grateful leave of listening nature to whom he had poured out all the force of his soul, whom he inspired with his

fancy. The grass seemed to cling to his feet, the flowers to lift their tiny round faces up to him, the leaves to flutter after him. All around him was living and moved by his breath, and he felt as happy as if he bore a charmed life, immutable youth, inexhaustible power of creation in his breast. He believed in this one new song. He thought it the only one he had ever invented, the first that really made him a poet. His former compositions were indifferent—almost repugnant to him. As he strode away, he repeated part of his new ballad, pleased, smiling. When he was gone, Ulla crept up to the spot he had just left; there she flung herself upon the ground, and kissed the traces of his feet, the rock on which he had rested, the leaves on which his hand had lain. Zealously gathering grass and leaves, she hid them in her bosom, and fled away in the opposite direction.

CHAPTER IX.

ON THE ANVIL.

"It is stifling here!" said Una, pushing up the sash. "I can't think what they mean by making a fire as if we were in winter, just because it is raining a little."

A chill wind blew in, and swept quite a deluge of rain into the room. The wet creepers beat against the panes and the trees tossed like the sea, shaking their burdens of water down into the brown streams on the pathways.

"There! That's something like air," said Una. "No, Missy, don't shut the window, please; I've been choking all the morning, and I feel so dreadfully hot; I've already put on a lighter gown. No, Missy, don't shut it; I shall be wretched if you do."

"Is that my Una, talking like a capricious child? It is very cold to-day, and you coughed yesterday as well as last

night, very frequently, too, and you moved restlessly in your sleep. I came to your room and saw you."

"Dear Missy, must I be watched at all times like a little child?"

What could it mean? Una was irritated and impatient, she knew not why. She went over to the chimney and flung the logs asunder with the poker, the blood surging up to her temples as she did so. Then she looked up at the mantelpiece.

"There now, the clock has stopped again, and it is so tedious to move the hands. No, Missy! Don't, Missy! I can't bear the striking."

The beautiful girl intercepted Missy's gentle hand, as the old lady silently turned to wind up the clock. Presently she stepped to the table.

"Gladys has again put up my pencils, in her passion for tidiness. I fancy I see her. But it is really too hot. I can't breathe!" She opened another window, which was a little more sheltered from the wind and rain. "Ah, there's air; don't shake your head, Missy. If I can't bear it otherwise! I am so young still, I feel the heat so much." She held her hands out into the rain.

"How pleasant Martyn will be if his betrothed catches her death of cold," said Missy reproachfully.

Una drew back her hands and pressed them against her cheeks.

"Hot! hot!" she said, pointing to her chest. "And such a queer taste." The next moment a gurgling sound came from her throat; she put her handkerchief to her lips, and then held it out to Missy, purple, dripping with blood. A mute look of horror accompanied the gesture. Missy's knees shook and her heart seemed to stop its beating, but she smiled with the dauntless heroism of affection, saying:

"Oh, that's nothing ; I had it often when I was young ; it's the same as if one's nose bleeds, quite a tiny vein bursting in one's throat. I would only not speak in your place and sit down quietly ; it's better to keep quiet. No, it's nothing at all, Una ; you see how calm I am ! We will only take the handkerchief away ; I'll get you a clean one and some salt water, and you'll be all right directly."

As she spoke she let down the window and placed the young girl in a big, soft arm-chair.

"There," she said, "just you look at the pretty rain-drops for three minutes till I'm back again."

Out in the passage Missy leaned a moment against the doorpost, trying to steady herself. When she returned, a telegram had been dispatched to Martyn, and Mrs. Gwynne had been gently informed of the truth. She came back with the salt water and a clean handkerchief, her finger on her lips, followed by Mrs. Gwynne and Gladys, who had crept in behind them as white as a lily. Una threw herself sobbing into her mother's arms.

"Must I die, mother ? Say no, mother ! I am so happy ! I must not die, must I ? Mother, mother, don't let me die !"

"How can you think we should let you die ?" said Mrs. Gwynne, suppressing the tremor in her voice, while Missy and Gladys exchanged a mute look which filled their eyes with tears.

"We will send for Martyn, if you like. See, how nice that your betrothed is a physician ; now you can give him the pleasure of curing you, my child."

"Is Martyn coming ?"

"I have already written," said Missy.

"But not telegraphed ?"

"Yes, even telegraphed."

"That I am very sick?" Her tears flowed afresh.

"No, unwell; I said only unwell."

"You are not very sick, you know, my own Una," put in Gladys; "you will soon be well again."

"Does my father know?"

"No," said Missy, "shall I fetch him?"

"Yes, fetch my father, Missy! No, no, not yet. What will you tell him, Missy?"

"The truth, child."

"The truth!" There was something broken in the exclamation, and again the blood gushed from the girl's lips.

"Die? What will he say to his Una's going to die!"

"Martyn will tell him that it is not dangerous," whispered Mrs. Gwynne, kissing her child's moist forehead. Una dropped her head upon her mother's shoulder as the lady knelt beside her. Gladys walked to a remote window, and her tears fell as fast as the rain outside the panes.

"We had better put you to bed," said Missy.

"Oh, already to bed! When shall I rise again? Ah, leave me here for another hour. I'm only so cold. Mother, I'm so cold; can't you make me warm?"

"I'll cover you up warmly; only pray, pray don't speak!"

"But I must ask you, mother, or I shall die with fear."

"Don't you know that we shall do everything, my child—everything in our power?"

"And I was so happy! Mother—mother—must I die?"

Gwynne was sitting at work in his library. He had just returned from a visit to a sick parishioner, had changed his wet clothes and sat down to prepare his next sermon. A trembling finger knocked at the strong oak door.

"Come in !"

Thus does one sometimes call *come in*, when fate knocks, softly, gently, and brings misery and destruction with it.

Missy had never gone on such a hard errand ; she could have wished the house to fall in and bury her before she reached the vicar's room. She came in quiet and pale, and stood opposite to Gwynne, at his great writing-table.

"It might be well if you would come over a moment."

"I am very busy just now. Can't it wait ?"

"Perhaps ; but we are a little uneasy."

"Is anybody ill ?"

Missy's lips *would* quiver, but her voice remained low and steady.

"We don't quite know what is the matter with Una ; she is not at all well."

"Write for Martyn."

"We have already done so. She is rather frightened herself."

"Frightened ? What ails her then ?"

"Well you know she has coughed for some days past, and last night she was feverish, and just now, just now, there came blood."

Gwynne grasped the elbow-rest of his easy-chair, and compressed his lips. At that moment Gladys crept in, but stopped inside the door, leaning against the doorpost, and sobbing as only a very young creature can sob at a first great grief.

"Come here, Gladys, my child !"

Gladys glided through the room and sank down before her father, burying her head in his lap and crying as if her heart would break. He stroked her glossy hair, and his eyes grew dim. When he could trust himself to speak again, he asked :

"Was there much of it, much blood?"

Missy nodded.

"And she was frightened?"

"She is continually asking—whether—whether—she must die," said Gladys hoarsely. "And I cannot—cannot—bear to hear it."

"Your mother bears it."

Gladys raised her head.

"Yes, father! Mother is heroic!"

"Well then, we will be like your mother."

"But she must not die, father. God will not do that. He will not take Una from us."

"If it be His will, it is sacred." Gwynne coughed, he felt such a pain in his throat.

Missy had slipped out, had covered Una up, and was sitting on a low stool warming her feet, while Mrs. Gwynne whispered words of comfort to her frightened child.

When the vicar came in, Una raised her burning eyes to him: "Father," was all she said.

He took her hand in his, and did not speak. The fire crackled, the rain splashed, the trees rustled, and those three human beings were as still as only great joy or deep sorrow can be. The sky had grown so dark that the fire-light falling on the group was stronger than the daylight. Another fit of coughing came on, and brought a few drops of blood. Gwynne's eyes dilated; for an instant he turned his head toward the window; then he looked at his wife, who was smiling encouragingly at her child. She did not dare to look at her husband, lest she should lose her self-command.

"Shall we not put you to bed?" said Gwynne.

"Ah, me! I shall not leave it again!"

"That will be for Martyn to decide. Perhaps he'll per-

mit you to get up to-morrow. Come, let your father take you in his arms, as he used to do in the old days, and carry you to your little bed. You don't know how nice and warm it will be, and so white and pretty and fragrant."

Una smiled.

"And then I'll find you something to play with. You need not be alone, you know. We'll be quite merry. One must show sickness a cheerful face ; it passes much more quickly so, than when one looks frightened."

Gwynne had always possessed the gift of cheering invalids ; the young girl smiled again, and could not find it in her heart to ask the fearful question on account of which she had sent for him, but suffered him without another word to take her in his arms and carry her upstairs. Mrs. Gwynne and Missy quickly undressed her, and she soon lay in her white bed, looking very lovely with her great, brown eyes, and long, fair tresses. Her hands had grown white and transparent within the last few hours. Gwynne had gone downstairs to get a picture book to amuse his sick child with. He felt as if his feet were lead, and as if he could not say, in the first agony of his heart : "Lord, Thy will be done !" It was too hard ! He found Gladys before the chimney, her hands clasping her knees, and her head bowed upon them, letting her tears flow unrestrained. His voice sounded a little severe.

"Gladys !"

She started to her feet.

"Gladys ! There is much work in store for us ; do you mean to be an idle laborer ?

"Father, I cannot ! I cannot, father !"

"What have I done to merit having a cowardly child !"

Gladys cried no more. She clasped her hands and hung her beautiful head.

"A time of heavy sorrow approaches, Gladys, and you want to shake off the yoke on the very first day, instead of bending your young shoulders beneath it and helping to pull and to bear? Is that worthy of a young Christian?"

Gladys went up to him and bent low to kiss his hand. Then she ran upstairs to her mother's room and bathed her face, that Una should not see the traces of tears upon it.

The heavier the sorrow, the fewer the words.

"What's the matter with Una?" asked Morgan, meeting her in the passage.

"Spitting blood," whispered Gladys, and flew past him to join Missy, whom she assisted a while in her preparations, before she trusted herself to go into the adjacent room and look at Una. Morgan turned to seek his father, when he saw him coming upstairs with a book in his hand.

"How soon can Martyn be here?" asked Gwynne, and two burning red spots appeared on his cheeks.

"To-morrow night," was the laconic answer.

"Shall you drive over to the station for him?"

"Of course I shall, father."

"And what shall you tell him?"

"What I know."

"It will be a great shock to him."

"Why, haven't they telegraphed it to him?"

"Not too clearly."

"Then I will telegraph clearly to him at once, that he can bring the necessary medicaments, and save time."

"Do you think we shall gain much by saving time?"

"Yes, I do, father."

"I do not." The vicar walked along the passage with heavy steps.

His son looked thunderstruck. Just then the youngest

boy appeared from the upper story, sliding down the banisters. Morgan seized him severely by the arm and whispered, with contracted brows : " How often have you been forbidden to do that, naughty boy ? Next time I see you, I'll whip you to make you remember. To-day you are to be quiet, and tell your sisters not to make a din. Una is ill."

"Una?" The fine blue eyes grew radiant under the golden mane, in the relieved consciousness that it was very nice of Una to be ill just at the right time to spare their owner a whipping.

"Very ill?" asked the boy, with the selfish purpose of softening his stern brother's heart, but looking all the while like a Raphaelesque angel just come from heaven, and ignorant of human mischief.

However, Morgan was not to be softened. On the contrary, he seemed to grow more gloomy every moment.

"Yes, very ill. You'll do well to keep downstairs, all of you ; there must be no pattering of feet over Una's head. One can't send you anywhere in this pouring rain, you little plagues."

"But we're very good."

"Indeed ! Good enough to be whipped. There'll be no joking now. I'll show you the whip."

The little lad smiled as sweetly as though he had been promised a garden full of flowers, and nestled against his brother.

"You couldn't, Morgan ; you love your Freddy."

"God loves us too," said Morgan, patting the golden mane, "and yet he chastises us severely, and we don't even know what for."

The little lad stared to see his big brother's eyes suffused with tears. The first doubt had entered his soul, at

a flash ; and he meant to be a minister. He shuddered to feel his faith shaken, his confidence unsettled. The first "Why?" had passed his lips ; the first question had penetrated his soul : "Why must the innocent be unhappy?"

He stood with his hand on the banisters, contemplating the struggle which awaited him. If he could not profess his faith with a happy heart, he dared not become a minister, and then he could not offer a heart and a home to Kathleen. He wished to go on believing as childishly as he had hitherto believed. But every instant swept him farther away from the gates of Paradise, which he had passed with his first "Why?" flinging himself into a sea of questions, a hopeless abyss of doubts.

That night no one slept. Una complained of great pain in her side, and of her chest aching with every breath she drew. A short, dry cough caused her great uneasiness, and every drop of blood that passed her lips terrified her anew. On the following day the house already wore the marks of heavy sickness and anxious, sleepless nights. All looked haggard ; everything was hushed. The servants spoke in whispers, the children sat sadly huddled together in the chimney-corner, and one of the brothers tried to occupy them, but ever and anon relapsed into sorrowful thoughts. Out-of-doors the rain poured down in torrents. Morgan had driven to the station to fetch Martyn. He had not slept either, and felt quite surprised when his eyes closed from sheer weariness on his sorrowful journey.

The two men greeted each other in silence, but when they sat in the carriage, Martyn's questions came fast and his eyes moved restlessly, while he bit his mustache and made no comment on Morgan's replies.

"But what is your opinion?" Morgan asked at length.

"I must see her first," was the answer ; then both were

silent and stared with growing impatience ... the endless way.

But the horses went at a quick pace along the heavy roads, sweating and foaming with their exertions, and splashing the carriage with mud.

Una sat propped with pillows, breathing fast and coughing almost at every breath.

"Hark!" she said, lifting her white hand, and a bright radiance came into her face.

At the first glance, as he flew into her out-stretched arms, Martyn knew everything: Inflammation of the lungs and pleurisy. He heard it even before she had loosed her embrace, while he whispered "My own! My darling! My angel! My all!" And she would not loose her hold of him, but pressed her burning cheek against his.

"I thought I should die before you came. And now I have you, Martyn. You are here, Martyn. You will not let me die, will you?"

The young man needed supernatural strength to retain his self-control, with the agonized eyes of father, mother, brother, sister, fixed upon him, awaiting comfort or misery from his lips. He auscultated a long, long time, repeatedly begging Una's pardon for fatiguing her so much. Her father sat down on the bed and took her into his arms while Martyn bent his ear to her back, and he felt her fever-heat through his clothes. Martyn auscultated until he could control his voice. Then he said quite cheerfully: "Ah, well, an inflammation of the lungs, as hundreds have in this horrid weather; it will pass quickly enough, if my sweet betrothed will obey."

Una clung to him. "You must not leave me and speak with the others outside."

"No, I shall stay here," said Martyn, sitting down on the

bed and holding her burning hand in his. "Morgan will give me pen and paper. I shall write here, and I may as well jot down all that ought to be done, to insure accuracy." She would hardly let go of his hand while he wrote. The parents tried to read Martyn's impenetrable face, but they could descry nothing, except that dark shadows were gathering beneath his eyes. He wrote down for them what he had ascertained, and then turned to his betrothed with a smile, changing the pillows that had grown so hot again, and soothing her with numberless small attentions. She smiled happily and contentedly, fancying, with the ingratitude of all invalids at the advent of their favorite, that she was really well tended now. Gladys felt a poignant jealousy at this, for which she blamed herself bitterly, however. Missy knew that it must be thus, and was quiet. Mrs. Gwynne tried to take hope, and the vicar thought to blunt his intolerable anxiety by work.

Martyn no longer allowed all the family to busy themselves about the sick girl at the same time, but insisted on their resting by turns, to keep them strong and in good spirits, he told them.

"And you?" said Mrs. Gwynne.

"Oh, he must go and rest very soon," said Una, tightening her hold on his hand.

"I?" he replied, smiling. "I need little rest, I'm not used to it."

"He never sleeps," murmured Una, as though she would say: You are never tired, are you?

"Never!" said Martyn, and he seemed bent on proving the truth of this assurance. For he was up and astir during the whole of the following eight days, watching the flickering flame of that life as a miser would watch a treasure sinking into the sea. When Una objected to some pre-

scription or other, he said : " For my sake ! " and she submitted. Gladys was a great comfort to all of them. She seemed to have discarded every thought of self after that first storm, and to move like some fine machinery, obedient to every sign, always at hand, never too near, always watchful, and never tired. Once her father found her in an adjacent room, busily stirring some dainty drink over a spirit-lamp. He silently put his arm around her and drew her to his heart, holding her very fast. She clasped his neck for a second, and then bent over her cookery as assiduously as before.

The fine autumn sunshine brought better days with it, and all began to hope. But then the second lobe was affected ; other physicians were called in who shook their heads, and another violent hemorrhage brought Una to the brink of the grave, and caused her to relapse into her first despair.

" Must I die ? " her lips murmured day and night, ignorant of the cruel tortures they caused. Martyn felt as if his heart were being wrung in a vise ; he grew more haggard every day. Gwynne put his hand so often to his side now that the movement no longer attracted anybody's attention, except Martyn's, who entered his room one morning and asked permission to auscultate his heart. Whatever he found there, he kept to himself, but it could hardly have been anything favorable, for he sighed heavily as he went downstairs.

One evening at the close of a hard day, Gwynne sat staring into the fire. He had to prepare a sermon. What should he say ? About what should he preach ? How should he master the heavy throbbing of his heart and comfort others from the depths of his own distress ? He had rested his arms on his knees, clasped his hands and compressed his

lips. The fire cast quick reflections under his brow, but the usually shining eyes remained dim.

Morgan came in.

"Father, do I disturb you?"

No answer.

"I should like to speak to you, father."

His son's voice recalled his roving thoughts.

"Ay, my son. What do you want to tell me?"

Surprised, almost impatient, he thought of Kathleen, and considered the time ill-chosen for speaking of love and marriage; besides, Kathleen would not be a welcome daughter-in-law.

Morgan was silent for a few seconds, as though he were seeking words. But as generally happens when one has a trying thing to say, he broke out at last without any preliminaries:

"Father, I can no longer become a minister!"

Gwynne stretched himself as if he would rein in a restive horse, and waited for his son to continue.

"No, I cannot!" repeated Morgan, grasping the back of a chair to steady himself.

"Why not?"

"Because I have lost my childish faith."

"And cannot you put a firm, manly faith in its stead?"

Morgan slowly shook his head.

"I have not slept for weeks, father, in the struggle of my soul. I bow my head in shame before you, when I see you so firm in the storm, so unwavering; but I cannot. Why should one suffer? Why this system of the world? Is it a system at all? Is it law? Is it justice? Since I have begun to doubt, I see injustice everywhere. Why wealth and indigence? Why sickness and death? Why sin? And what means the forgiving of iniquity in one place, and the

visiting it upon children unto the seventh generation in another? And why are the pure chastised? What has Una done that she must die? What have you and my mother done that you suffer like this? What have I done that my peace is destroyed and my faith annihilated? Father, do answer me?"

He paced the dusky room with long strides, and presently stopped before his father.

"And are those the thoughts which the first trial calls forth in you? Is that all I have been able to give you out of the fullness of my heart? Can you no longer see what is great and good, because the first rime has fallen!"

"No longer, father. You know that I was zealous and looking forward to my beautiful vocation with all my soul. Oh, I have wept many a long night, father, regretting my beloved vocation, which I must relinquish, if I will not lie and perjure myself; and the more closely I try to cleave to it, the more completely do I lose my hold. The mantling vines to which I cling give way and bring the masonry down with them, and everything falls to ruin, burying me under dust and fragments, a lost man."

"My child! such times will come in youth; and believe me, they are not the worst. I know you. You will be purified in this fire. Have but a little patience with yourself. I give you time. My books are yours. My time is at your service, when you wish to give vent to your thoughts. You need not despair because you doubt. You can go forth from this ordeal much firmer than you were. Only take time and patience, and let your hot heart spend its passion. You seem to me like an ant that would ask: 'Why am I crushed underfoot? I was so industrious and so necessary in my sphere. I will no longer be an ant if that is all the justice done me, and all the reward I get for my fidelity!' Do not

be so cowardly as to fly from yourself, my son ; fight ! What harm can sleepless nights and tears do you ? Our vocation is so sublime that we must be formed for it with painful chiseling. Your life has been too easy hitherto. Your calling is that of a servant ; then submit to the rod that fits you for it. Pass through the purgatory of your doubts like a hero. I do not hurry you. I give you time. You shall enter upon your profession with a happy heart, victorious, under no constraint. Who are you that you would understand the divine system of the world ? What can you know of it ? The nearest object is a mystery to you ; the germination of the humblest plant is a book with seven seals, and you speak grandly of systems, as though you stood among the stars. Your doubt is nothing but pride. God will lay his hand upon you, and will not let you go before he has humbled you to the dust ; for you are destined to become a man and a Christian ! ”

Gwynne's eyes were luminous. He had shaken off his sadness, and felt his strength grow in the beams of his own conviction. Morgan stood before him, biting his lips and breathing hard. He thought his father did not understand him and was as unjust to him as Heaven, forcing him into a profession for which he was not fit. With the whole force of his youth, he rebelled against his destiny. Gwynne felt this, but he did not despair. He had confidence in his son's character, and thought to let him ripen to healthy manhood. He did not fear the struggle for him. He feared but one black spot—Kathleen ! Could he have removed that, he would gladly have entered the lists to lead his son to victory himself. But Kathleen came between them, estranging the young man from him, and nourishing his doubts by her own moral confusion.

“ How long is this to last ? ” asked Morgan bitterly, when

they had kept silence a while, wrapped in their private thoughts.

"God will show us."

"I don't think he will."

"Nay, he always shows us the end to be attained by honest fight."

"And suppose the end be death and perdition?"

"A hero can die, but he does not go to perdition."

"Is that all the consolation you can give me, father?"

"I fear it is, my son."

Morgan bowed his head and was mute. He thought of Kathleen with such longing that he felt as if his veins must burst. He was tempted to fling himself at his father's feet, entreating him to release him from following the dreaded profession and to give him Kathleen, since he must die without her. He wanted her at once. And now he was to wait till his Christian faith should be firm, he who could not believe any more. His impatience, his despair, were so great that he felt as if he could fling himself head foremost into a sea of flame, and let doubt, and struggle, and love turn to ashes. He had not moved from where he stood in the wavering light, and the father watched the storm in that young soul with hope and heavy care. Hours rolled by, and the father still sat in his arm-chair, and the young man still stood before him, not daring to fall at his feet, because he feared the strong man's fiery earnestness and holy severity in spite of himself.

"And this is what you have brought me up for, father," he said at last, in a low, hoarse voice.

"I hope I have brought you up to be stronger than your fate, firmer than the uncertain lot of man, better than your savage instincts, more honest than your impetuous desires, more prudent than the foolish intoxication of your senses."

"You are mistaken, father. I shall succumb."

"You are mistaken, my boy. You will be guided."

"Crushed."

"Saved."

"Good-night, father."

"Good-night, and God bless you, my child."

Morgan lay on his bed, in his clothes, biting the pillows, raving, thinking he must go mad, longing to rush downstairs to his father and tell him all, longing to go off into the wide world, to take Kathleen with him, to Australia and turn shepherd. "I cannot! I cannot!" he moaned all the night. At daybreak he got on his horse and tore madly across the country, wondering whether it would not be as well for him to break his neck.

CHAPTER X.

IN THE SNARE.

"HAVE you heard?—Una Gwynne is dying," said Tom, sauntering up to the breakfast-table, around which the family was assembled.

"Perhaps it is not quite so bad as that," said Vaughan severely.

"When I tell falsehoods, people doubt me; and when I speak truth, they don't believe me."

"Una dying!" exclaimed Kathleen, rising, and turning ghastly pale.

"Una dying!" repeated Edleen, in a low voice, folding her hands on her lap.

Minnie thought she would like to cry, if her father did not look so stern and incredulous. Winnie fixed her piercing eyes upon Tom.

"Maybe it's something like the story of the poor woman," she said suddenly. Tom reddened.

"What poor woman?" asked Edleen.

"A woman Tom wanted something for; you remember what, Tom."

"No. I've not the slightest notion what you're talking about."

"You never know yourself what you are talking about," put in Kathleen. "Goodness knows where you pick up your ideas."

"She knows very well what she is talking about," said Minnie resolutely.

"Well, what?" demanded Vaughan.

"Shall I tell, Tom?"

"Of course. I've got no secrets with you, I hope."

"Humph?—haven't you?" murmured Winnie, with a sly face.

"Look who is coming there!" exclaimed Kathleen, and with the joyful cry, "Llewellyn!" the children rushed out to the terrace to welcome their favorite friend.

Vaughan looked severely at Tom.

"Will you explain what the children have been alluding to?"

"Oh, certainly. They gave me their little savings for those poor fellows, Will and Toby. That's all."

"And did the poor fellows get them?"

"To be sure they did, if my messenger was honest."

Vaughan whistled softly and rose to go to his study.

"I have written for Lewes to come," Edleen called after him. He turned at the door "I have written for Lewes to come and help me to put my books in order a little."

"But you are so orderly yourself?"

"Oh, not always." Edleen had turned very red.

She walked to her desk and looked idly out of the window at the terrace, which had been converted into a glass house against the approach of the inclement season, and where Minnie and Winnie had taken possession of the minstrel's knees. He was telling them of old, old harps, that had been made of stone, and that asses or mules used to carry after the minstrels, and that had to be dragged into the halls by two or three men ; and how, when the minstrel had sung, a cup filled to the brim with gold was presented to him. The children listened with open mouths, and forgot even Prinnie, who entered the breakfast-room by the open glass door, and made free with the remains of the meal on the table, sugar, bread, milk, and other nice things. For the two who had stayed in the breakfast-room did not attend to Prinnie either.

"Kathleen !" said Tom, "come and sit on my knees."

"No, that won't do."

"Indeed, why not ? It did very well the other day ; why shouldn't it do again ?"

"I don't know why. But it won't do. Do you want anything of me ?"

"Yes, I want a kiss."

"And what besides ?"

"Nothing."

"That's not true."

"I'll tell you something in your ear."

"Say it aloud."

"Shall I shout it ?"

Kathleen flew to him and laid her hand on his mouth :
"You're capable of it !"

He immediately put his arm around her and took her on his knees.

"I have to tell you that you are distractingly pretty, and

that poor Morgan is as mad as a March-hare about you, and that Llewellyn is wild when he sees you, and that Temorah would like to poison you, and all this requires punishment," he said, beginning to kiss her.

She tore herself from his arms and stood before him, flushed and angry. "You—you—you're not worth so much as looking at."

"I know it, and that's why people look at me. A nice world it would be, if people cared for none but the goody-goody fellows in it! What would become of the scapegraces, who are so much nicer and merrier, and so good-natured? You wouldn't love me half so well, if you weren't so horribly jealous of Temorah!"

"If you name *her* once more, I'll scratch out your eyes!"

He caught her by both hands and held her firmly.

"And Temorah is more beautiful than you, much more beautiful and much more passionate, and loves me much better. You're only a little girl with lemonade in your veins instead of blood; you're not capable of loving at all. Temorah is a woman!"

He held her so tightly as to hurt her, and gloated over the fury that flashed from her blue eyes. He loved to torment her, just as he was fond of stroking cats the wrong way till their hair emitted sparks, and strangling them when he had made them wild.

He liked to enrage Kathleen; she was such a pretty cat in her fury, and when she burst into tears at last, one could comfort her like a naughty child.

This pleasant game was going on in the breakfast-room, while Edleen had warmly welcomed the old bard, ordering a repast to be brought to him, and relating that Winnie was learning quite by herself to play on the harp. Llewellyn

had immediately offered to teach the child, and the pretty strains floated along the terrace. The child was trembling with excitement, and Minnie sang and chattered by turns, while her sister played and sang, and seemed to pluck the old man's song from his lips. The autumn sun fondled the white and golden locks, and woke song after song in those three childish hearts. Llewellyn was never so gay as when he was among children. Old as he was, he could play and lie in the grass with them, telling endless tales, and the children loved him as the flowers love the summer breeze. In the glass house the harp and the voices sounded particularly beautiful, too, and the birds came quite near, laying their little heads on one side and listening to the sweet tunes. Sometimes the three friends burst into hearty laughter, while Winnie's little hands touched the chords as if they had always been at home among them. The old man repeatedly embraced the child in his joy at having discovered a little genius in which no one had believed before.

"My birdies!" he called the two little girls, and he felt sorry that Edleen seemed too preoccupied to rejoice at God's magnificent gifts with the gratitude of a happy mother.

When Winnie was grave, her eyes dilated, and the corners of her mouth curved downward a little, as is often the case with children who have thought and suffered beyond their years. But when a smile broke from her lips, it spread to her cheeks, eyes, and chin, and betrayed much playfulness. Minnie was always the same Fiesole cherub, and when she sang at the top of her voice she looked as though she were standing in the presence of the Almighty, and chanting his praise. Llewellyn's eyes wandered with insatiable delight from one child to the other.

"I think," philosophized Winnie, "before we were born we must have been lying about in little pieces."

"I think I was asleep," opined Minnie.

"After all, it's a great pity," Winnie began again, "a great pity——"

"What is a pity, my child?"

"Why, I know it can't be; I only mean it's a very great pity that it makes such a difference to God whether one is good or naughty."

"But one is always good, child."

"Oh, no! It's so queer! now I'm good and playing on your harp, and when I'm doing the very same thing on mamma's harp, Kathleen beats my hands red and calls me naughty."

"Well, had you asked for permission to play?"

"No," said the child slowly, lifting her brows, and a delicate blush suffused her face.

"And Tom calls me good when I give him all my trinkets, and papa would punish me if he knew," said Minnie, nodding so energetically that her bright ringlets fell over her brows.

"I like flowers better than trinkets," said Winnie.

"Why, child?"

"Because one feels pity for flowers."

"Yes," said Minnie, "poor flowers! But I pitied those red stones too, when Tom carried them off so quickly; I wondered whether they wouldn't long to hang round my neck again."

"Pooh! stones don't feel," said Winnie scornfully, curving her lips; "the wind doesn't do them any harm, and picking doesn't make them fade."

"But they're so bright inside, just like eyes."

"Maybe it is the sun that makes eyes and stones shine," said Llewellyn.

"No," said Minnie, "for if I press my fingers on my eyes, they shine also at night."

"What's that, a step-father?" asked Winnie.

"What your father is to Tom."

"Well, what is he to Tom? For you see he doesn't love him a bit, and so Maggie said 'he's only his step-father.' What's a step-father?"

"Tom had another father."

"Where's he gone?" asked Minnie.

"He has been dead this long time."

"Can people have more than one father, then?" asked Winnie.

"Yes, if their mother marries again."

"I shouldn't like that at all," said Winnie, her eyes growing very round and dark.

"Nor I," echoed Minnie.

"Then Tom isn't my brother at all," concluded Winnie.

"Nor mine," came from the little echo.

"Nay, when he is your mother's child?"

"Humph!" mused Winnie, "he isn't quite really her child."

"No, only just a little bit of it," said Minnie.

"He's a wicked boy! but one mustn't tell," whispered Winnie.

"He always teases us," added Minnie, in an equally cautious whisper.

And then the two nodded and looked up into their old friend's eyes.

Thus chatted the three.

Meanwhile Edleen sat, with dry lips and cold moist hands, opposite to Lewes, and seemed to grow paler and thinner as she talked.

Lewes was a man of unblemished character, an extremely conscientious man, who had raised himself to his present position by hard work, and had laid by a little money.

He entertained such unbounded reverence for his beautiful mistress that it looked in his inmost heart like love unconfessed and crushed underfoot, quite a little garden of flowers, but so sad and rimy as only an autumnal garden can look.

"I begged you to come," began Edleen, "because I hoped you would assist me in a most painful matter."

"Thank you very much for thinking of me."

"No, no, don't! I don't even know how to tell you."

Edleen tried to moisten her lips with her tongue. But she did not succeed. She rubbed her hands in her thin handkerchief, and cleared her throat with a low cough.

"My son causes me great anxiety," she began anew. "He is, I fear, leading a bad life, and I cannot restrain him. I do not know what he is about; I know only that he is continually asking for money, and has even drawn bills upon me. In my distress I paid them out of the house-keeping money, and as I know no other way to refund that I caused Kathleen to sell some jewelry for me."

"I know," said Lewes.

"What? You know——"

"Our jeweler informed us of the fact, and the ring was immediately bought back by Mr. Vaughan. It must be in his keeping at present."

Edleen hid her face in her hands for a moment.

"What am I to do?" she moaned.

"Tell Mr. Vaughan everything; he will help you."

"I cannot! No, I cannot! He had severely forbidden my giving my son money. But now my cash-boxes are empty, and yesterday that terrible man was here again."

"What terrible man?"

"A man with a red face, eyes close together, white hair; I'm so afraid of him. He has some new bills of my son's,

and I cannot pay them, and my son says he will shoot himself if I do not pay."

"And I am to assist you? How?"

"That is what I ask *you*. How?"

"The straight way is always the best."

"Oh, no; oh, no; I cannot! I have never been used to such humiliations. I brought my husband nothing but a prodigal son; I have no right or claim to anything. I feel like a stranger, who should ask pardon for being here with my son; and now—now—I rob my husband of his money to give to my unfortunate child! I *must* refund it. Do understand. I *must*. Else I really am a—a—no! I am very wretched!"

Lewes could hardly bear to see this woman weep.

"And so I thought," she continued, hastily controlling herself, "that you might help me to sell my jewels a little more cleverly than Kathleen, who got next to nothing for that splendid diamond, and whose proceedings were so quickly discovered."

"A difficult task. How can one conceal such a sale?"

"Oh, I know a way." Edleen's face was suffused with burning blushes. "If one sells the diamonds separately and replaces them by paste——"

Lewes started to his feet and stood bolt upright for a moment. Then he sank back into his chair, and his spare figure seemed to collapse.

"I know," she said bitterly. "I know what you are just calling that in your heart. But you do not know what tortures I have suffered before I came to this pass. The fear of my husband's implacable severity drives me to dishonesty. I am such a coward that I had rather bear the stings of my conscience than my husband's look."

Lewes felt at that moment that he hated his employer.

"Mr. Vaughan is a man of such stern rectitude that he makes no allowance for juvenile sins. But the sinner is my child, Lewes !"

"Is there no possibility of preventing such extravagance in future ? For I see no end of this."

"No, there is no end, I know that ! I have no power over him. Nobody has. And I have prayed for this."

"Prayed ?"

"Ah, you don't know. My first husband was consumptive, and I had already been married for several years and had no child—no child ! And I lay on my knees day and night praying to have a baby, entreating God, who had done wonders before that day ! And lo ! my prayer was granted ; a beautiful boy was given to me. My husband did not live much longer to rejoice at the gift. I did not feel his death so deeply as I should have done, for I had the child, my sole thought, my sole passion. Up to his sixth year he was the sweetest child one could see. People stopped in the street to look after my cherub. I did not leave him day or night ; I watched his every breath. I think the most passionate love is naught when compared to a mother's passion. You cannot understand that, Lewes, as you have no child. But I was blind to the sun, and the world, and my own poverty. I saw nothing but him—him, my heaven-sent angel, my wonderful boy. From his fourth year I taught him in play. He could soon read and write two languages ; he knew geography and a good many historical facts which I told him instead of other stories ; he was quite wonderful, and people would marvel at his cleverness as well as at his beauty.

"Suddenly he fell very ill, mortally ill, of brain fever. The doctors told me the child had not many hours to live. And then I fell upon my knees and committed a heavy sin.

I prayed : 'O God, leave me but my child, and impose whatever penalty or expiation you will upon me ! I will bear it all my life without murmuring ; but leave me my child !' And my child was saved !

"The doctors cautioned me to keep him very quiet, or his intellect might suffer. But he seemed to recover very rapidly ; only, he was changed. He began to tell falsehoods, for which I found no punishment but hot, hot tears ! Then he used to promise me on his knees that he would mend ; but yet he grew naughtier every day, teasing and tormenting other children as well as animals, breaking my things, tearing his clothes, so that I began to feel, for the first time, how poor I was.

"At that juncture Mr. Vaughan offered me his heart and hand, and I accepted him gratefully, only to obtain a home for us both and a father and the possibility of a careful education for Tom. But then my misery began. My husband thought to gain his purpose by severity. I see them still, when he told me for the first time that he must whip Tom, and when the child grew frantic under his heavy hand and the bitter humiliation. From that hour the cane and the whip were often in my husband's hand. I used to hide at such times to cry my heart out ; for I saw that it was all in vain, and that Tom's character was being completely ruined by this treatment. But Mr. Vaughan has not much knowledge of human nature, and fancies the world can be ruled with principles.

"From that time I committed another heavy sin in concealing and glossing over Tom's transgressions, in order to shield him from punishment. He would lock him into the cellar, with no food but bread and water, and the child would turn frightfully sick, but did not mend his ways ; only with me he was always so sweet, so winning and tender,

begging my pardon on his knees for all the tears I shed on his account, and winding his arms around me as if to protect me. He had retained so much sweetness in his character that I could not resist him and did anything he wanted, to comfort him when he was in despair. He would roll on the ground before me, striking his head against the furniture and threatening to strangle his step-father; and when he was gone, my husband would tell me of some new misdeed for which he should be severely punished. It was just as if I had thrown fire and water together. Really, really, a little more gentleness would have gone farther with Tom. As it is, I am still standing between those two, and my sufferings grow worse every day. My distress is so great, that I know no longer where to turn. My husband himself has taught me to be so terribly afraid of him; now he must bear the consequences. It is a great misfortune. For he is an excellent man, and I owe him the profoundest gratitude. He has snatched me from want and penury, has overwhelmed me with presents, and proved his love to me in a hundred ways, except that one of pardoning my poor child. And thus, a coldness and bitterness has gradually arisen between us, which cannot be cured. And therefore, dear Lewes, I cannot turn to him with prayers. I had rather pass through a flaming furnace. He will estrange my son completely from me, or drive him out into the un pitying world.

"I tremble every hour lest he should come and acquaint me with this his resolution. And I cannot bear it! I cannot part with Tom! I am so unpardonably, unreasonably, unspeakably fond of my poor child! And I said I would bear any penalty or expiation. Sometimes one does not know what such a word means, and what one foresees does not come to pass, and one is ruined by unforeseen things. Help me, Lewes, pray, help me!"

With trembling fingers she drew a beautiful set of jewels from her pocket.

"Please, Lewes," she said, offering it to him. And Lewes felt something sparkle and swim before his eyes, and then the casket lay like hot lead in his hand.

"I'll think of it," he said, looking as pale as if a swoon were about to numb his senses and to deliver him from the dull pain at his heart, the rushing sound in his ears, the bitter taste in his mouth. But by an intense effort of will he overcame his faintness and sat staring fixedly at the ground.

"If I could but love her less madly," he thought. Suddenly a bright idea flashed through his brain. He remembered that he had a tiny fortune of his own, and a transient smile played across his face.

"I'll try," he repeated, rising and holding the hand she offered him in his own for a moment. When he had closed the door behind him, he drew a deep breath, as one does when one comes into the open air after having passed through the intoxicating atmosphere of an orchis-house. Ah, he had a little fortune. He would sacrifice it and let her believe it to be the proceeds of her diamonds. But afterward? When that abyss had swallowed it up?

"And when the big dog saw that it was his little sister——" Minnie was saying outside.

"He wagged his tail and lay down at her side to watch her," concluded Llewellyn.

Tom and Kathleen were still standing in the breakfast-room; her cheeks glowed, her eyes sparkled.

"You're not so conceited as to fancy that I've a good opinion of you?"

"Oh, no, my pet. But you love me all the better because you'd like to reclaim me. Why, I'm so unhappy, Kathleen, that a stone would be touched; how much more then a

sweet little girl like you. And I went to Temorah only because I really didn't know where else to go. I was without money and without shelter. That was all. But I love *you* as my soul."

"You don't love that at all."

"Not love my soul?"

"Kathleen!" thundered Vaughan's voice at the door. Their hearts stopped beating for terror.

"Kathleen, have the goodness to come to my study."

Hanging her head, Kathleen followed the master of the house upstairs.

He let her pass into the room, and closed the door.

"If you fancy," he began, "that it suits me to have you flirt with my scamp of a son under my own roof, you are greatly mistaken. And if you think I should not have the heart to turn you out in spite of your poverty, and Edleen's tears and prayers, you are even more mistaken. Do you think I shall tolerate such behavior in my house? What must my servants think, who have not cleared the breakfast-table for fear of disturbing your *tête-à-tête*? Do you consider it proper to permit a young man to touch you? I tell you, Kathleen, I shall not tolerate such things. I have confided my dearest, most sacred, and most precious treasures to you, and therefore your conduct must be unimpeachable, worthy of the pure childish souls you have in your keeping."

"My husband has not much knowledge of human nature," Edleen had said, and it seemed as if the events were about to corroborate her opinion. Vaughan was prepared for a flood of tears, and a prostration, things that were extremely distasteful and unpleasant to him.

He was, therefore, greatly surprised when a mischievously sparkling little face was raised to his, and Kathleen ex-

claimed, with ringing laughter : "Tom ! But I've nothing whatever to do with Tom ! Why, it's Morgan Gwynne who loves me and wants to marry me. Not Tom. God forbid ! How funny ! No, we spoke of those poor miners, and how we should manage to relieve them ; and Tom is always so easily moved, you know, or, at least, pretends to be, and so he tried to put his arm round me. But I didn't permit him to. No ! God forbid ! Ha-ha-ha-ha ! Morgan Gwynne is my languishing lover ! Ha-ha-ha ! Quite an acceptable one, too, and no vagrant. No, Tom ! Fie, Tom ! Why, he's a wicked man. No, I've nothing whatever to do with him !"

And with a long and deep courtesy she whisked out of the room, like a kitten, and flew down the stairs to Edleen, who was still lying back in her chair, weak and ghastly pale.

Kathleen knelt down beside her, kissing and fondling her hands.

"All right ?" she whispered.

Edleen bent her head affirmatively.

"I've kept the house occupied the while, acting a little love-scene with Tom, because I knew the master of the house to be watching us, and getting myself thoroughly scolded, just to keep the coast clear for you down here. Your husband really has a nice way of scolding people, I'll say that for him. It's quite a pleasant pastime."

"Do you think so ?" murmured Edleen, and her nostrils moved slightly.

"Yes ; he has such a fine voice, going straight to one's heart. I'd like so much, just for once, to be afraid of a man."

"Should you ?" said Tom, who had come in unperceived.

"Oh, not of you," laughed Kathleen.

"We'll see. But what's the matter with my little mother ?

She's ill, Kathleen ! Don't you see that ? My little mother ! My dear little mother ! You're not going to be ill, I hope !"

The three in the glass house had grown silent, as though their pleasure were spoiled and they feared a hostile assault. Winnie's hands hung listlessly among the chords, and Minnie had laid a finger on her lip.

"Where are the children ?" asked Kathleen. Her voice did not sound amiable now.

"Out there," replied Tom.

"It has long been time for lessons ; get on, children," cried the young girl.

The little ones threw their arms around Llewellyn's neck, and took grateful leave of him.

"I must most emphatically beg," said the old man, "that the child is permitted to practice her music every day."

"Yes, if she is good, by way of reward," returned Kathleen, leading the children away.

Llewellyn hastened to depart. He felt that he could neither cheer nor comfort here ; and he wanted to see whether he could not divert his old friend Gwynne from his sorrow for an hour.

"Tom," said Edleen.

"Ay, my sweet mother. Here I am at your feet."

"Tom ! I am sinning out of love for you ! I entreat you, spare me ! You are killing me. You have already robbed me of happiness and tranquillity, of sleep and peace, and a quiet conscience. Oh, Tom, Tom, spare me !"

Tom laid his face upon her hands, and his tears rolled over them. He could weep so beautifully when he liked, such a shower of remorseful tears, that he was perfectly irresistible.

"Mother, I'm a scoundrel ! I'm unworthy of you, I know it. I'm not worth the bread I eat !" and his tears

fell unintermittingly upon her slender fingers. "If you ever hear that I've blown my brains out, forgive me, mother, forgive your unhappy child!"

He started up, as if he had lost all his self-command, and rushed out of the room. As he shut the door, he thought: "What shall I do now? Stay! the fair Ginevra has a glass at my service and pleasant looks and a neat little room! Hurrah! Long live Ginevra!"

Vaughan came downstairs and found his beautiful wife alone, and so weak that she could hardly lift her hand. Full of anxious care, he sat down beside her and passed his arm under her neck; she closed her eyes wearily upon his breast, and he was glad that she would rest in his embrace. He did not guess that she merely closed her eyes in order to avoid speaking to him.

CHAPTER XI.

AT CHURCH.

A LIGHT hoar-frost was thawing in the merry sunshine, while the bells rang and the congregation came pouring in from every direction. Here and there transparent ice cracked under the pattering feet of red-cheeked children. The yellow leaves glittered, as if strewn with diamond-dust, and wherever the sun had not yet penetrated, the roads were frosted and played in bluish shades. The landscape was enlivened by the high, black felt hats and red cloaks of the peasant women who walked toward the ancient abbey where Gwynne was to preach.

Among the congregation were Vaughan, thinking with a heavy heart of his poor wife, whom that reprobate would torment to death, and before whose maternal weakness he

stood lamed and defenseless ; Edleen, who flushed hotly with shame when she remembered how she stood with Lewes and into what she was betraying him ; Kathleen, who felt her love for Tom at its height, and yet hoped to meet Morgan and to drive him to distraction ; Winnie, who intended to accuse herself before God of beginning to hate Kathleen ; Maggie, whom Kathleen had cunningly slandered and threatened with dismissal, and who was afraid of being parted from her little darling Minnie, who was clinging to her hand ; Lewes, who had laid all his savings at Edleen's feet, and had been told that it would not suffice to cover the new debts, and who now stood hesitating before his first fraud, telling himself, with a cold shudder, that he would sacrifice his honor for her, and would get no reward, hardly a word of thanks ; Mrs. Gwynne, who might for one hour dismiss the tranquil smile from her lips and cry to God for fortitude in her gnawing pain ; Gladys, who hoped to weep herself calm ; Missy, who would have liked to lay her weary heart in the grave with her darling ; Morgan, who looked gloomily forward to meeting Kathleen and rebelling against every word that would fall from his father's lips ; all the vicarage children, on whom the shadow of a first grief had fallen ; Temorah, hiding a heavy heart under the folds of her cloak ; the men who had been rescued from the mine and who revered Tom like an angel ; even Llewellyn, who rarely went to church and used to say that the forest was his temple, the birds' carol his choir, the storm his sermon, and whom Gladys had persuaded to come this once and hear his brother poet, her father, speak. All—all had come.

Only four people were missing, two who were near heaven, and two who were straying toward hell : Una, whom her betrothed had carried to the window to see the sun ;

Martyn, who was supporting her head on his shoulder, and talking to her about getting well and having a home of their own, while his eyes, unperceived by her, grew dim ; Tom, who lay in feverish sleep after a wild night, and Ulla, the witch, who sat sorting herbs in her ravine, and listening to her thoughts as to a song heard in childhood.

The sun shone down from heaven upon all this earthly wretchedness, and did what he always does : waking life and strength, but also consuming and withering ; causing flowers to spring from rubbish, and vines from stones, but also parching with heat, and illuminating mold and dust ; bidding children and birds rejoice, and poor sinners despair ; smiling upon the happy, torturing and mocking the sorrowful—the mighty, sublime sun, with his inexorable smile !

Amid the ringing of the bells the congregation approached the ancient Celtic church, whose crypt was hewn into the living rock, whose roof was barely weather-proof. It lay among beautiful woodlands, and its stone aisles, with their clumsy, round arches and pillars and their high windows, had received the devout for many centuries past. There was no organ, but the extremely fine, pure singing sounded almost as solemn under the vaulted ceiling.

Gwynne had paced the remotest walks of the park at sunrise ; in his deep distress he sought for strength to edify his congregation. He thought with agonizing dread that he would have to stand in the pulpit and speak to others of courage and fortitude while he was desponding himself. Now while the bells were ringing, he fell upon his knees in his study, hiding his face in his hands and baring, all his weak, weary, sorrowful heart to his God, telling him that he could not speak—not to-day. He could not bow beneath the hand which lay too heavily upon him. The physical

pain at his heart was so great in itself that he could not bear up against it.

"I am thy unworthy servant," he prayed. "My God, teach me to forget myself! Do not—do not forsake me!"

His thoughts grew confused. He felt as if he had forgotten text and sermon in the torture he was undergoing, in the cry, "I cannot!" And out there the bells were ringing with their old sweetness, telling of hundreds of Sabbath days on which he had gone up into his pulpit with so much joy, in the strength of his eloquence, in the fullness of heart which happiness calls forth in a good man. And to-day, when he would have concealed himself and his unbounded pain, like a wounded deer, he was to appear before all those people, before all those eyes—inspire confidence when he was fainting himself.

"My God! My God!" he cried in his distress; "Thou dost not let the cup pass away from us, if it is thy will that we should drink it! But do not forsake me! Come to me! Fill my trembling heart with thy light, and make it still!"

The red blood flowing from his child's lips glistened before his eyes; her hoarse, broken voice sounded in his ears; and earnestly though he strove to shake off his terrible affliction, it pierced his heart again and again like a flaming sword; he felt as if burning coals were heaped upon his breast, as if his tongue were paralyzed.

"My God! My God!" he prayed. "Thou givest the will and the power. Thou givest the humbleness which disregards itself and thinks its suffering naught before thy might and greatness. My God! I do not murmur, I only tremble, and my heart faints under its burden of grief!"

And the bells tolled and tolled, calling him, telling him that his congregation was waiting. Then he rose, took up

cap and books with a trembling hand, and cast a last fervent glance through the lofty bow-window. A sunbeam fell upon him, like a reassuring smile from above, and he left the house with a firm step. Unconsciously, he lifted his eyes to his sick child's window, and his hardly gained courage very nearly forsook him again, for an emaciated little face smiled down at him, in which nothing seemed left but a pair of eyes, great, brilliant eyes, and white teeth. Martyn's appeared beside it, very grave, as if he were thinking less of his own sorrow, at that moment, than of the father's heavy task. His face was also emaciated with sleepless nights and agony, with the double torture of watching the hourly progress of a disease he was powerless to cure.

Gwynne felt at that sight as if his feet would not carry him further, and his heart had ceased its beating. But he waved his hand up at the window and walked on.

For the bells were ringing and calling still.

In the church, people were growing uneasy at his being so late. Mrs. Gwynne glanced continually at the door, but she had such unbounded confidence in the strength of her hero and guide, that she suppressed the anxious thought, he might have been taken ill.

At last the door opened and the minister's tall form appeared in a broad ray of light. Every face was turned sympathizingly and curiously toward him as he walked up the aisle. His shoulders were slightly bent, and his hair had almost suddenly turned gray, especially on the left side where his hand was wont to rest when he worked or thought. His face wore an unearthly expression, something like a saint's or a martyr's, and the singing grew more fervent, as his mere appearance touched and inspired the congregation. He felt as if the ocean were flowing around him, and for a moment after reaching the pulpit he could not distinguish

a line or recognize a single face. He was fain to breathe a short prayer, until the throbbing of his heart subsided and he could speak and see again. Then, with a superhuman effort of will, he opened his Bible.

Borne on his beautiful voice, the words of the text floated clearly and sonorously above the listeners' heads, and while he spoke them, all grew still around him and within him, as though he were lifted up on a cloud, and his feet no longer felt the ground beneath them.

"Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near.

"Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts ; and let him return to the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him ; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts ; neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord.

"For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."

In the breathless silence pervading the ancient church, each syllable resounded, not loudly, but like drops of precious perfume falling into some sacred vessel. And he began his sermon as softly ; but the force of his eloquence soon carried him away with it, and a sunbeam slanting across him from an opposite window, he stood in a very halo of glory, his forehead luminous, his eyes penetrating the hearts of his hearers, while the silence around him grew so deep as though not a soul were breathing in the crowded edifice.

"Do not be so fearful, my brethren ?" he cried, "do not follow your own thoughts, which lead you to perdition !

"Sooner than humble yourselves before your brother, you

would commit an evil whose consequences are as incalculable as a meteor's course. Turn back, while there is time. Go to your brother and say to him : ' I meant to wrong thee ; punish and pardon me, but save me from destruction.' You fear his harsh words. You tremble lest he should regard you with scorn. But when God speaks, a greater trembling will come over your hearts ; you will pale before his look, and his wrath will crush you. You turn against the humiliations that come to you from men, and you do not consider in your folly that God can fling you into the abyss of iniquity toward which you strayed, and leave you to perish in it unreclaimed ; and when he has branded and cast you off, you cannot escape the scorn and mockery of the world, nor dare you rebel against its blind and cruel justice.

" And you who sin out of love, ask yourselves whether it is love that leads a human creature to perdition. No, it is selfishness, hard-heartedness, unbounded weakness, but not love. Do not dare thus to profane the most sacred of words, to use it as a mask for the corruption of your hearts, for the worm gnawing at them. Out of love ! Let love make you strong, pure, severe. Let love quench your desire ; let it prevent your sacrificing the least particle of your soul's life. And when you are tempted to do wrong, do not fancy that the words ' out of love ! ' will wash you clean, but ask yourselves of what nature such love can be.

" And you, who pride yourselves on your righteousness, have you not sinned even through this pretended righteousness ? Have you not repulsed and driven to despair what your charity might have reclaimed ? Have you not seen the wrong into which your chastisements led the erring, nor felt the weight of your hand upon the weak ? You think yourselves walking in the light of your purity, when you are

groping in the dark, poor fools ! Have you never asked yourselves whether your conduct was qualified for the task of reforming sinners ? Have you turned for enlightenment to your God, instead of pursuing your own course with harshness and obstinacy and the cruel adage : Bend or break ?

“(And you, my children, who have stumbled and fallen, lift your bruised hearts and crushed souls to God. You too shall be redeemed.) Bear the penalty manfully ; if you were weak enough to fall into sin, be strong enough, at least, to take its consequences. Bow your hearts under the chastizing hand which leads you through the purifying fires of expiation. Now that your sin is committed and all fragrance and sweetness and beauty have passed away from it, look upon it in all its ugliness, and do not tremble. God saw it thus ugly already when you committed it, and yet he did not destroy you at once, but spared you for a time when you may rise unto him again, when he will envelop you in his almighty love and you will know yourselves forgiven.

“ And some of you have permitted hatred and thoughts of revenge to take root in your hearts, and now the venomous tree flourishes and you do not know, yourselves, how great the harm is that you have done and must do so long as you do not cast it out. Have you considered that you have lost the right to call yourselves Christians, that you have become noxious members of human society ? For a vindictive man has no control over his thoughts and actions, and does mischief wherever he turns. He lowers himself to a brute that cannot suppress hate and envy, but revenges itself without remorse. Would not it be a sublime feeling quietly to put your hands in God's and to consider your tormentors but as so many weak tools destined to make

nobler beings of you by developing your self-control and your charity?

"And you who are guilty of falsehood, have you no fear of God? Have you never seen his mighty sun which shines into the remotest nooks and by-ways, which will bathe in light what you would wrap in darkness, and in whose glare you will stand naked and miserable, shamed and despised? Do you not tremble lest God tear the mask off your faces when you least expect it, lest he lay his finger on your falsehood and wither your eyes and hearts with his terrible glance?

(Do not be so fearful, my brethren. For your sins arise from fear : {fear of men, of spiteful tongues, of small hardships, of so-called humiliations.}) But what are you, that you will not bear your brother's rebuke? Blush at your cowardice, and do not think you can escape the sorrows of your days. You must endure them one by one. Not an hour will be spared you. And if you do not purify yourselves in this purgatory and rise unto the divine light, you will be cast into the utmost darkness. And you who lament under your burden of sorrow, who rebel in sadness and despair, who cannot believe that God's thoughts are good even though you do not understand them—pray, pray for enlightenment. Pray for the humility which endures and does not question, which bows gratefully and does not murmur, which suffers itself to be guided and does not doubt. Surely God's thoughts are instinct with such benevolence that we must often submit in our ignorance and be satisfied. What do we know of the light above us? What of our final destination? Do we know what the center of the earth, what the nearest star conceals? Can we foresee what joys shall spring for us from our woes? Suffer God's hand to till the soil of your hearts, my brethren! He alone can sow. He

alone knows what is to ripen in you. And if he lay your dearest in the grave"—here the minister's voice faltered a little—"let your confidence rise the more sublimely, let it soar toward the divine thoughts which you shall one day be worthy to understand.

"The lizard sees no farther than its sunny wall, the bee than its meadow, the mole than its feet; how would the eagle marvel at their blindness, at the narrowness of their horizon, he whose eyes sweep sea and land! And yet he is but a dweller of the heights and knows little of the deeps below.

"And shall we, who do not know our own tiny globe, be able to see and judge of God's ways, or tell him what to do?

"Worship, my brethren! It is not so difficult. You must only shake off what is earthly and not confine your souls' soaring flight in petty cages. Release them from your narrow breasts. Send them upward; let the sublime light absorb them as the sun absorbs water; doubt not, fear not; the element for which your souls were born will sustain you. Send them joyfully up on high, where they are one day to find their home, their consummation and their completeness; let them follow the dear ones that have gone on before you, the hymn which floats upward—God, in whose thoughts you will find final redemption and everlasting light. Amen."

His powerful voice, his fiery glance, the knowledge that this man was speaking out of the darkness of bitterest affliction, had an even more touching effect than his words. A good preacher is like the air, which receives a thousand voices and carries them, united in a single sound, to immeasurable heights. He collects all sorrows, all thoughts, all tears, and bears them into higher regions, to let them

sink down again as dew, purified and refreshing, making men feel better and stronger, and ready to fight in the good cause—until the flatness of daily life again lays its rude hold upon them, and they are weaker than fate after all, disheartened at sight of the familiar burden, murmuring under their daily more grievous crosses, and say at last : “ It is easy for him to talk ; he does not know how I feel.”

“ It is easy for him to talk.” Nobody could say that to-day who saw the marks of a heavy tribulation upon him, and the dignified way in which he bore his lot. He had hardly reached the church door, when he was hastily summoned. Una wanted him ; she had again had a hemorrhage and was frightened, and he alone could reassure her. The parishioners stood together in groups, talking about the sad event ; only those who had sorrow of their own to cope with, started quickly and quietly for their homes.

The Vaughan family lingered for news, walking silently in the park.

Lewes hurried home, and sat down to write to his mistress that he could not obey her behest, that he had but *one* honesty and *one* soul. And then he tore his letter again and flung down his pen, thinking that Edleen would perhaps be heroic and release him herself. But on their way home, Vaughan had crushed her reviving courage by a thoughtless remark, and she was as weak and helpless a woman as ever.

Winnie was resolved to cast all hatred out of her little heart, until she saw Kathleen flirt with Morgan, and her indignation was stronger than all her good intentions.

Temorah thought she would go to her mother's grave, which she had not dared to approach again. She would seek forgiveness there, and tell the dead that she meant to bear everything patiently in expiation of her sin, and to for-

give the destroyer of her life. She directed her steps to the lonely churchyard, where the leaves lay high on the ways and glittered in the thawy hoar-frost. The leaves lay high on the graves as well, and Temorah was obliged to remove them before she could get near her mother's modest cross. She knelt timidly down by it, in an agony of dread lest the grave should scare her away; she wound her arms around the cross and leaned her brow against it.

All was still as death. She felt as if she were mercifully received and not repulsed, and with tear-dimmed eyes she sought her mother's beloved name. But her eyes dilated, and her blood curdled in her veins, when she saw "Tom" cut in large, clear letters into the wood of the cross. She very nearly cried out loud. She staggered back and caught at the tall granite cross on a rich man's grave hard by, on which no tears had flowed for many a day. She clung to the sharp-edged, ice-cold stone to save herself from falling; but her senses were numbed, and she sank down in a heavy swoon, lying unperceived among the leaves during several hours.

When she recovered consciousness, the sun had long passed the meridian, and shone from the west upon the silent churchyard. No soul, far and wide, to sprinkle a drop of water on the poor, forlorn girl's lips. There she sat among the damp leaves, staring at the terrible word, and still fancying it must be a delusion of her senses, until at last she crept up to it on her knees and felt the letters with her trembling fingers. Who had done this fiendish deed? Who had discovered her secret and meant to proclaim it thus to all the world? She trembled like water in pouring rain; her teeth chattered, and a fearful curse upon this secret foe broke from her violet lips.

Suddenly she grew quite still. She saw the summer day

when she had loved Tom ; she saw the bridge on which she had said, "Come !" She saw Kathleen hidden among the flowers ; she saw Kathleen stray hither and cut the name into the cross. In feverish haste she began to dig it up with her hands, moving it to and fro and finally pulling it out of the ground. It was heavy ; but she meant to carry it, and fastened it on her back beneath her cloak. Thus she walked away with tottering steps, bent like an old woman, along the road on which Kathleen had come that day. At last she reached the bridge and crept into the hollow, where the withered foliage reached to her knees. There she laid down cloak and cross and began to search. After groping a long time among the yellow leaves, she found a glove and a veil, and put both in her pocket. Then she swept the leaves aside and dug deep furrows in the soft black soil. She laid the cross in them with the writing downward, and covered it high with earth and leaves. She knelt on the damp ground till all was done ; then she raised herself wearily, threw her cloak around her, and turned to go home. She did not reach her cottage till after nightfall, dead tired and hungry. When she went in, something moved in the dark room and came toward her ; she did not know what it was until she heard Tom's voice : "At last ! Have you taken to gadding about after dark now ?"

He received no answer. Presently a light was struck and Temorah stood before him with flashing eyes.

"Go away !" she said very calmly.

"Oh, no ! I have a right to be here, and I shall stay here to-night and as long as I please. I wish to disappear for a while, and no one will seek me here."

"Go away !" repeated Temorah, pointing to the door.

"No, sweetheart ! (You should have said that last summer. But then we said 'Come in,') and opened our arms

and received the bridegroom with honey on our lips and sunshine in our eyes. Ay, my pet, and now I am come again, to hide myself near the heart whose beating I know as well as the ticking of my watch. Don't give yourself such airs ! You are very glad to have your Tom, I know."

She shook her head, rested her hand on the table, and groaned aloud. The next moment she lay on the floor in another fainting-fit. The day had been too much for her, and the present shame was beyond her powers of endurance. Tom thought this extremely unpleasant, but still he saw that he must needs assist her.

As soon as she recovered, she pushed him away with both hands, which amused him so much that he had nearly grown enamored of the beautiful wild girl again.

Temorah bore his presence in mute defiance, locking him in when she went to her work and giving him food, for he had not brought anything, not a penny, with him. She made no answer when he called her his little wife, and tolerated his blandishments as one does a big dog's that one will not repulse for pity's sake. She did not strive against the tedious monotony of his days. On the contrary, she sat opposite to him in silence. But he worked himself into a flaming passion by way of pastime and tried to conquer her anew. And she felt so wretched the while that she sometimes thought of killing herself.

But then she remembered Gwynne's words that one must look upon one's sin in all its ugliness and bear its consequences manfully. Tom was so repulsive to her now that she thought his every gesture hateful, his every word insipid. Love was dead within her, quite dead, destroyed by fear and shame ; she could not even comprehend how she could ever have forgotten and deluded herself to such a degree. She shrank from herself in disgust. She never thought of

speaking of the future, a trait Tom considered charming, since he could not help her, but rather needed assistance himself. He did not seem to feel the ignominy of his position, while Temorah continually sickened with horror of him and herself, with the degradation of being the tool and slave of such a man, and receiving the most shameful treatment at his hands. Her dignified conduct could not restrain the insolence of his speeches; he even appeared to take a special pleasure in humiliating her when he saw her so haughty. Then, one day, he disappeared as he had come, without a parting word, and she could breathe more freely, and satisfy her hunger; for she had starved herself to provide him with food. He had been in hiding with her for nearly four weeks—four weeks of ineffable pain and torture, during which her cheeks had grown so hollow as to attract inquisitive looks, which she could not escape, since she had to work for Tom's maintenance.

When she had been too proud with him, he had invented a new way of tormenting her. He had threatened to show himself to passers-by, not his face, but his figure, so that people should know there was a man in her cottage. He gloated over her anxiety, and declared that was the way of taming creatures of her stamp; he was a born conqueror; everything must lie at his feet.

Now he was gone! But who knew whether he would not come back!

Edleen passed this time in a state of mind which caused Vaughan to fear for her life. She questioned him repeatedly whether Tom's disappearance was not his doing—whether he had not shipped him off to some distant country, and did not believe his asseverations to the contrary. And when Tom returned, she was so rapturously happy that her husband left the room in violent exasperation.

CHAPTER XII.

IN THE MINSTREL'S KEEPING.

IN vain did spear and catapult
Assail the stronghold tall,
That ne'er had yielded yet, nor seen
A foe within its wall.

The bastions gleamed with helm and shield,
The towers with watch-fires blazed,
The warders warded true and well,
Until the siege was raised.

In marble hall, at festive board,
By torches' merry glow,
The knights repose from battle toil ;
But grave their talk and low.

Their warlike chief is stern and pale :
" My truest knight lies slain !
I scarce can taste our goodly cheer,
My goblet foams in vain.

" My wife is fair and waits on me
With sweet and queenly grace ;
And yet I care not now to look
Upon her winsome face.

" My truest knight lies on the bier—
He made the foe behold
How dauntless victors meet their fate !"
The lady's glance is cold ;

She sees his brow droop on his hand,
And speaks no soothing word ;
Among the ruddy pine-tree logs
The crackling flames are heard.

They bear the dead into the hall—
Illumed by torchlight keen,

The haughty beauty of his face
And form once more is seen.

He lies mysterious, still, and strange ;
The mail upon his breast
Is cleft and stained, his strong white hand
Enfeebled and at rest.

" Now drink to him !" the chief exclaims,
" Now drink, my warriors true !
His path to mighty Wotan's hall
Be rich with sparkling dew !

" But if this man did any wrong
For which he should atone,
Come forward and accuse him straight,
Before Valhalla's throne ! "

He stops and looks from face to face ;
But all in silence stand ;
The dead has never wronged a man
Among that sturdy band.

But who advances calm and pale,
Without remorse or fear,
A glittering dagger in her hand,
And stands before the bier ?

Their chief's fair wife !—Her flashing eyes
Proclaim the dead man's guilt,
As in his lifeless breast she sheathes
Her dagger to the hilt.

Llewellyn had not sung, only thought this ballad ; now he repeated it softly as he sat in his arm-chair, his feet on the broad fender, his hands on his knees, watching the flaming and crackling fall of the great logs on the hearth. Outside the snow-storm whirled around the castellated building, which towered high on a steep, densely wooded rock, Roofs and trees were so heavily laden with snow that small

avalanches rolled down here and there and fell with a dull crash on the white ground below.

At the minstrel's side stood a table with a bumper of wine upon it. Harps of every form and size threw spectral shadows on the distant walls, and the pillars and pointed arches of the hall gleamed and darkened fitfully with the flickering of the trunks in the chimney.

A large volume lay open on the table, with a pen beside it ; but Llewellyn did not think his poem sufficiently polished as yet to merit recording. He ~~listened~~ listened to the wind-harps sounding strangely from the tower above—a chant of spirit voices, an incomprehensible rhapsody. He was wrapt in the blissful feeling that steals over the poet on lonely nights, when he achieves his work without a struggle, when forms and words crowd to his sight and lips unbidden, and flow forth in a broad river of song. Stormy nights are favorable to such trances ; the poet feels as though unknown voices were whispering him what to sing, as though he were lord of the globe that his song envelops, a dweller in Valhalla who has long forgotten and quitted this fleeting life. Men who think of wine, beauty, soft couch, and rich board, or even of a noble horse, fine music, and similar pleasures, when they speak of enjoyment, do not know the loftiest, most refined and most perfect of delights : the poet's hour of peaceful inspiration.

In that hour his thought is so vivid that it shows him all he aspires to in palpable reality ; he longs for nothing, for he possesses all in the most perfect form ; no realization of his dreams, no actual joy and splendor in lordly halls could vie with the spiritual bliss and beauty that charm him in his homely cell. This delight must often be purchased with hard struggles, but often, too, the gods smile upon their favorite and cast such radiance around him that he feels himself possessed of vast creative power, and hardly dares

to stir for fear of overhearing the breathings of his genius. That is why the poet loves to work at night, saying with a contented smile : " Now no one will disturb me."

However, no night is so dark, no snow-storm so fierce but that an unexpected guest may break in upon the solitude with a quick clatter of horsehoofs and a knock at the gate. Llewellyn listened in surprise. Who could it be that sought admittance at this hour ?

He heard the visitor stamp his feet to shake off the snow, and exchange a few words respecting his horse with a servant ; then a slim, young form passed through the gloom of the hall into the firelight, dangling a wet fur cup and saying with a laugh :

" No doubt you are astonished to see me at this time of night. But I lost my way in the snow ; else I should have been here after sunset."

" Tom ! is that you ? You come here in such weather ? "

Tom laughed, but Llewellyn noticed the deep lines about his mouth, the unsteady flickering of his eyes, his hollow cheeks, and sunken temples. There were signs of decay in Tom's pretty face, and Llewellyn looked sadly at him, while the young man stared absently at the fire and had evidently forgotten where he was.

In a hospitable house the master has no need to ring and order refreshments. The servants know what behooves. Accordingly, the best that cellar and larder afforded was neatly served at once, with the deprecating remark that the fire had been lit to prepare warm food, but that the storm would cause some slight delay.

" Oh, it's too much as it is," said Tom, swallowing cup after cup of red wine, but not touching the meats. " I was so thirsty," he went on. " I think the cold makes one more

thirsty than the heat, and more weary too, for the matter of that."

"To be sure," said Llewellyn, looking attentively at his young guest.

"He is afraid of something and has come here to conceal himself," he thought, when his penetrating eyes had read Tom's countenance.

"Mrs. Vaughan is well?" he asked.

"My mother? Yes, very well; no, not particularly so; pretty well, rather weak; one never quite knows what ails her, you know." Tom spoke rapidly, and then lapsed into a brooding silence again, evidently unconscious how much wine he was taking.

"I've been as sick as a dog," he said at last.

"Mrs. Vaughan must have been extremely anxious."

"Oh, no; she doesn't know; they needn't know everything at home, especially not the others." He laughed bitterly, the lines of his mouth visibly deepening. He was still staring at the fire.

"It would be well to eat a little after all," said the old man kindly. "You look so exhausted."

"How do I look?" asked Tom, starting; he seemed to have caught only the last words.

"You look very tired; a little food would do you good; it would make the wine taste better too."

Tom swallowed the steaming soup that had just been brought in almost greedily, but pushed the more solid food aside.

"Won't you stay with me a few days till you feel stronger?" asked the minstrel.

His guest looked relieved. "Oh, very willingly! I shan't be much in the way. I rarely stay indoors; I'm fond of roving about the forest, and want but little."

The old man eyed him still more closely. "He is hiding!" he thought anew. Aloud he said: "One can recover from many diseases here, the air is so pure."

"Is it?" rejoined Tom absently. "Is the air pure anywhere? I don't believe it is."

"Ah, what a sad thing to say, my son!"

"It's disgusting everywhere. Tell me of a place where one would not shudder with disgust, unless it be so tedious that one would be tempted to commit suicide."

"I hope the latter will not be the case here."

"Oh, no, this is not the kind of place that would bore me. I've been bored where others would have felt delighted. I've been bored in places where others would have given anything to be for an hour—bored till I felt like a brute."

"I have never found the time long," said Llewellyn.

"Of course not. You are like a young child."

The old man smiled. "Is it not better so?"

"I don't know. What's better? What's worse? Altogether, what's the meaning of good and bad, pleasant and unpleasant? I don't know. I only know that everything is disgusting, and I see that you are not disgusted. Consequently, you are a child; for you will have noticed that children are never disgusted."

"I think the world so beautiful that I find it an inexhaustible source of enjoyment, and my only fear is that age might blunt my susceptibility of its loveliness."

"Mine is so thoroughly blunted that I take no pleasure in anything, except, perhaps, in tormenting. Yes it *is* a pleasant feeling to torment somebody or something. One would like to wreak one's vengeance on each and all of one's fellow-creatures, for the mere reason of their existing and being so stupid or disgusting, or likely to be, if they aren't yet."

"I take delight in a flower or the crystals of a snowflake."

Tom darted a look of such incredulous disdain at Llewellyn that the latter felt almost uneasy at having uttered his thought.

"Snow covers mud, and flowers turn to hay," he said, curving his lips in a way that greatly disfigured his handsome face.

"Oh, the rapidity with which things perish does not make them less charming. I delight the more intensely in a perishable thing, because I know that I must impress it upon my memory if I would have my spirit enjoy it to the end of time."

"You call that enjoyment? Mine must be of a somewhat more material nature."

"Not advisable. The body is too quickly exhausted and can enjoy no longer."

"Don't say I can't enjoy any longer; I only require stronger stimulants."

"Till at last none will be left that would be strong enough. No, my young friend, that is no good system. One gains nothing by it, and when one comes to compare receipt and expenditure——"

"I'm used to deficiencies. They're my daily bread. But they can be made up again. The muscles can be rebraced and the purse replenished, I should hope, and then one is afloat again and can begin afresh. If one could only get rid of one's disgust too. What do *you* think of women?"

Llewellyn had looked profoundly sad, but now he smiled gayly and playfully.

"You ask a minstrel what he thinks of women?"

"Pooh! We're among ourselves now, with no woman

on the premises, I hope. For I'm sick of them; I don't want to see any."

"That's a pity."

"What's a pity? They're insipid—so insipid! and stupid beyond belief. Do you think there is one, a single one, high or low, beginning with my own mother, whose head I can't turn? I court them all and tell them of each other, and they fall the more madly in love with me for that. It's sickening!"

"I am very sorry for you."

"So am I. The only one who defies me is my sister Winnie. I pay her richly for it in every possible way, but that only serves to make her more rigid. I quite respect the little thing."

"So do I."

"Yes, you, on account of her talent."

"No, on account of her character."

"Character is a nice word, too! What's character? It's fancying one wants to do a thing which is unpleasant to others, or doesn't want to do a thing which would be pleasant to them."

"Character is judgment united with will."

"Pooh! Will and judgment are empty sounds."

"I don't think so."

"Well, you're a poet and live in the clouds."

"My dear young friend, a poet sees the principle and essence of everything!"

Tom laughed aloud.

"Nonsense! The principle and essence of everything is dust, and the poet smells flowers when he passes a dunghill, and thinks a man pleasing because he repeats another man's thoughts, and admires the woman who gives him a rose when he has sung her."

"And pities him whom fresh manure does not remind of the grass and flowers it consists of, who does not think a man pleasing when his heart is touched by a noble thought, and who does not kiss the rose a lovely woman gave him."

"But all is lie and illusion ; don't you see that ?"

"I see lie and illusion hide as much throbbing heartache, real joy, and deep light as the earth hides gold and precious stones."

"Your gold and precious stones are rubbish around which all the heartache and pretended joy turn, till it is trampled down by some idle foot. What can I find to fill my empty life ?"

"A fine song, a kiss, a thought !"

"Don't talk to me of songs that celebrate what nobody believes in. Kisses are miserable trifling. And thoughts ! Dear me, where shall I find one that has not been formed a thousand times before this ?"

"It may be new to me."

"Because you are a child."

Llewellyn reddened. "And do you think yourself a man because you have tasted of every cup and found gall in it ?"

"Well, perhaps I'm a man ; but I doubt even that. Maybe I'm merely an incarnation of doubt."

"I know something in which you believe : your mother's love !"

Tom was silent for a moment.

"If I were not so handsome, she wouldn't love me. She doesn't care a fig for my sisters."

"My poor, poor lad !" said Llewellyn.

"She married my step-father for the sake of tin ; and

when she wants some, she can't get it, while he rolls in gold. That's his love. Gold, gold, gold ! The little ones have got saving-boxes already, and calculate like little misers, and I'm the pariah, the prodigal son, the scapegoat. Since I've grown too big to be whipped, my daily bread is refused me, and since there are young girls in the house, I am watched like a mad dog. Is that a life worth living ? It'll kill my mother ; she can't bear those daily humiliations. She will certainly die. The man is killing her, who says, ' My son ! ' and is not afraid of my strangling him as he stands. If I'm going downhill, he kicks me to make me go the faster. He has never asked whether I've got a soul ; only whether I've money or not, and of course I never have any. He has heaped my mother with diamonds till she looks like a queen when she wears them ; but when she sold a single stone for me, he immediately bought it back, and I thank God that I didn't hear what he told her about it, or I should most likely have strangled him. I sometimes dream of a night that I'm clutching his throat in my hands."

" And have you never told yourself that you might end your mother's misery ? "

" By blowing my brains out ? oh, yes."

" God forbid, my poor lad ! By leading a better life."

" A better life !—confound it ! "

" Your present life must lead to ruin."

" Of course it must, if I can't get any money. Ah, gold, gold, gold ! How I hunger for gold ! All life hinges on it. If I had gold, I could buy unheard-of pleasures—I don't know myself what ineffable bliss, what perfumes and delights of all the earth I might enjoy ! "

" I possess them all," said Llewellyn.

Tom looked around the large, gloomy hall, with its

wooden chairs and table and the rusty old weapons hanging on its walls.

"Yes, I possess them all," repeated Llewellyn; "all of them here in my arsenal." He pointed to his forehead.

Tom laughed shrilly and bitterly.

"I'm so poor that I haven't even got any imagination—another deficiency! Do you not see that that's less than naught? I'm less than naught; and if I had gold, I should be more than a king, and people would lie in the dust before me and obey each wave of my hand—gold, gold, gold!"

Tom buried his face in his hands and wept.

And the snow fell, and the wind-harps sent forth a confusion of wondrously sweet lamentations, and Llewellyn thought as he listened:

"How blessed I am! The gold of sound and the kingdom of song are mine. Everything bows in joyful obedience before me, and laughs or weeps at my will. I am blessed indeed, and indeed a king." But he said nothing and suffered the young man to weep, hoping that his heart would be softened by tears;

"I am so afraid of hell!" said Tom suddenly.

"Well then, you should avoid the way to it."

"Oh, I don't mean the hell your parsons talk of. I mean the hell on earth, the cessation of everything: of strength, of enjoyment, hatred even, everything, and the beginning of a dull, flat everyday existence." He yawned. "A hell that consists of yawning."

"I think there is another. There is a hell on earth consisting of cells and chains for hands and feet, with no companion for the sufferer but a bad, bad conscience."

"And a handkerchief and a window-bar to hang himself on."

"The hanging is sometimes done by other hands."

Tom shuddered.

"One must only be clever, cleverer than the rest. People are so stupid, you know."

"Not so stupid as the clever ones when they grow frightened."

"Ah, one must beware of fright; else one runs into the hangman's hands."

"But, my child, why not turn back before it comes to that?"

"I can't turn back. Where am I to go?"

"Into the wide world."

"Gold!" cried Tom frantically. "Without gold one goes to the dogs over there, and dies a waiter, a street-sweeper, or an organ-grinder. I'd rather do that here, to annoy my step-father."

"And I had rather sweep streets than go to prison."

"I don't know that. You get food and a pretty good bed there for nothing."

"Why do you hide to avoid it then?"

"I?" Tom sprang to his feet.

"I know that my house is doing duty for a debtor's prison at this moment, my boy."

"Who told you so?"

Llewellyn rose and took a small Oriental mirror from a shelf.

"This," he replied, showing Tom his own white face. "Won't you try to do a little hard labor with me? I'll not make it very trying. You shall only see whether it makes you yawn."

"I always yawn, oh, I yawn! How can I work? I've no talent for anything. I can't do anything."

"We'll do some joinery together; that's merry and healthy work, and one cannot yawn over it."

"I'll go to sleep," said Tom. "Good-night, and thanks for sheltering me!"

He walked off, and called upon a servant to show him a room.

Llewellyn did not quit his seat by the chimney for a long time; he sat thinking of Edleen and her prodigal son. And being a poet, his dark thoughts took shape and form, and suggested the following lay:

"Oh, do not kill my only child!
His dying will not boot the state;
His heart was pure from bad intent;
But he was tempted—'twas his fate!

"He thought not to commit a crime;
It came upon him ere he knew;
Indeed, indeed, he meant no harm—
Oh, hear me—what I say is true!"

The landgrave knits his haughty brow;
He sees her eyes with tears are dim—
"I will restore thy son to thee,
So thou wilt weep to ransom him.

"So thou wilt fill this cup of gold
With tear-drops from a mother's heart,
Thy son shall put his hand in thine,
And ye shall both in peace depart.

"As thou'rt so full of grief and care,
Vent all thy sorrow, all thy fears,
That I may once behold and weigh
The costliest of human tears."

He offers her a cup of gold,
She takes it with a trembling hand;
Her eyes are dry—her bosom heaves—
She cannot weep at his command.

Her eyes are hot with unshed brine,
But not a single tear will start ;
She wept for years, but now she feels
Too weary and too sick at heart.

She looks into the golden cup,
She looks upon her son so dear ;
The landgrave's thin and bloodless lip
Unbends with a malicious sneer.

"I shed a sea of tears for thee,
My child ! But on this awful day
The floodgates of my heart are locked,
These strangers scare my tears away !

"I shed a sea of tears for thee,
Thro' many a year of bitter woe ;
The flags upon my chamber floor
Were hollowed by their constant flow,

"O judge ! have pity ! Go and view
The stones that prove how much I wept !
My breast is parched now, o'er my brain
The fires of mortal fear have swept !"

In vain ! the mother saw him die ;
She could not change the stern decree.
"The costliest tears," the landgrave said,
"Were never yet beheld by me."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE WITCH.

THE mountain sides were dripping with water, for the sun had shone hotly into the ravine and thawed the remaining snow. The dry leaves emitted a pleasant smell, the sap rose into the branches like ruddy blood, and there was a falling and splashing of forgotten drops that had glided

along the boughs and clung a while to the thin, tight buds before they made up their minds to take a final leap. A light column of smoke rose from the neighboring cavern and hovered about the moist rocks, and as the twilight deepened, the entrance of the cavern grew bright like the door of a forge. The drops falling from the rocks slid past the radiance like burning tears, and splashed on the stones below with a melodious sound, sometimes in regular cadence, sometimes at long intervals, the only things that broke the palpable silence.

Clad in picturesque-looking rags, Ulla cowered before the fire in the center of her cavern. A large copper caldron was suspended by a heavy chain from the rough rock overhead whose smoke-blackened and unshapely masses presented strange images to the fancy—big lizards, and long-fingered griffins, skulls, and giants. Ulla's own shadow looked strange on the rocky wall behind her, and her noseless face made the impression of a skull, being so fleshless, that the jaws and cheek-bones protruded, and the faultless teeth seemed discernible through the skin. From time to time she dropped and raised her wrinkled eyelids like a parrot, but gave no other sign of consciousness. Her skinny throat moved as if swallowing something, and once she opened her thin lips and displayed a chalk-white line of shining teeth.

The moon rose and illuminated a beautiful woodland valley through which a limpid river flowed. This was the moment for which Ulla had waited. She glanced at the interior of her cavern, where the moonlight stole in through a cleft grown with grass and heather, and threw a ghastly light upon various hides of dogs and bats, skulls and dried snakes. Then she untied her long gray hair, spread out her arms, and began to wheel round, slowly at first, but

accelerating the motion till her hair stood in a straight circle around her, and whizzed like a ropemaker's wheel. By and by she turned more gently, wrapping herself from head to foot in the falling hair. She seemed free from giddiness; for she suddenly stood still and wheeled in the opposite direction to unroll her tresses, while a wonderful light came into her eyes. Then she threw all sorts of mysterious things and venomous herbs that no human foot had brushed, no animal smelt, into the caldron, and encircled the hot brass with her arms, unconscious of its heat. Finally, she covered the threshold of her cavern with red-hot coals and walked unscathed across them on her naked feet, stepping into the open air where the moon shone through the bare trees and made them look like monstrous skeletons.

"Come!" she cried, with a pealing voice. "Come, thou spirit that swayest the world! Spirit of destruction, of pride and defiance, come in thy scorn and thy power! I await thee with tenderness! Come to my arms, thou to whom my soul belongs, to whom all is forfeit, who enslaves and devours every living thing! Come in the hurricane, that I may know thee for thyself! Come in thy splendor from the depths of hell, and rejoice and work wonders in me!"

While she was speaking, the wind rose and quickly increased to a storm, sweeping toward her outstretched arms, till she fancied the groaning trees were bowing before her, hell howling and shrieking below, and the wild huntsman passing above her. The moon was obscured by heavy black clouds. Ulla flung herself upon the ground, digging her fingers deep into the soil, and swallowing what she plucked out. She was shaking feverishly from head to foot.

"Spirit, spirit!" she cried. "Prince of darkness, de-

stroyer of the world ! Why dost thou pass me by this day ? Hast thou seen me give an hour to despised earthly love ? Hast thou seen me weep for a human creature ? See ! I pluck this earthly passion from my heart ; but give me back my power and thy love ! ” She pressed her face and breast upon the naked earth. “ No,” she cried, “ no ! thou passest me over in scorn and anger. I will be one with thy earth ; destroy me, but love me.”

A fierce flash of lightning darted across the sky and forest, and struck a tree near her, scattering its fragments far around. The ground shook under the crashing thunder ; the universe seemed to heave and sway from side to side ; a second flash ignited a more distant fir tree, and the hurricane swept howling, whistling, wailing through the thunder-shaken air. Ulla joined in the din with terrible lamentations.

“ Mighty spirit, why dost thou touch the trees and pass me by ? I will be free from earthly weakness ! ” She ran across the coals to the interior of the cavern, and scourged herself with nettles and buried herself in them. Then she twisted a long girdle of thistles around her body and rushed into the open air again, where she was greeted by a new flaming flash and a crashing clap of thunder. She flung herself upon the ground in her ascetic girdle and rolled herself to and fro till the thorns and thistles had lacerated her body.

“ See, I do penance ! See, great spirit, I punish myself for my weakness ! Forgive me, and come—come to her who loves thee ! Cast thy hellish flames around me, bear me through the air with thy hosts, spirit of the lost ! ”

Then she fancied that the storm seized her by her feet, her arms, her hair, that her body dissolved at its touch. With foaming mouth and fixed look she rose and glided

into her cavern, sinking upon a couch prepared of the ashes of her own fire, and lying for a while in numb unconsciousness. Presently she began to murmur incoherently, smiling in a strange trance, and addressing an imaginary fiend whom she supposed to have entered her dwelling. She fancied herself lifted from the ground, borne through the opening in the rock toward the moon, which caught her in its beams. She wound those beams around her body like threads, and began to swing in them—swinging from star to star, pushing herself off with the point of her foot whenever she came near one. And all about her was flash and flame, her own hair waving fire, transformed into a comet's tail. Hanging in the moonbeams, she swung herself through unfathomable heights, higher up than the wild huntsman and his train, who whistled and shrieked below her and cracked their whips at her, furious that she alone had risen above the rest, touching the stars and thrusting them out of their orbits with the point of her foot. She caught up a star as she passed, crushed it in her hands, and flung the glittering fragments as meteors through the night. She hailed a cloud, and sprang into it from her shining swing.

“Come to me, spirit of hatred!” she cried, and felt herself so supernaturally beautiful that all the spirits of darkness must be subject to her will. She smote the cloud and a flash of lightning darted forth from it, setting all on fire down below. A great cry of woe rose out of a sea of fire. Ulla laughed and listened, and looking down, she saw a thousand hands move to subdue the fast-spreading flames. At that moment an eagle sailed quietly past her. She seized its wing and vaulted on its back.

“Ho, my disguised friend. Thinkest thou I do not know thee in this shape? ’Twas imprudent of thee to come near me, for thou art bound to serve me. Thou shalt bring

young fir trees to my cavern, and lambs too, whose blood I will drink. Thou must serve me without demur. Why didst thou come near me in eagle-shape, spirit of blood-thirsty ire? On! I will ride! Higher, higher! Why dost thou take an eagle's semblance, if thou canst not soar up to heaven? Upward! Thy plumage is soft, thy wings are strong; I will ride. I will sweep through the ether and see the universe!

"Wretched creature! why dost thou creep beneath the clouds? Am I to see the earth? Ha! there goes a man through the night; dost see how his heart is burning? Tempt him to murder his mother for her gold! And take the money from those false-coiners, that I can fling it to the hungry poor! They'll want to buy bread with it, and will have to eat dust, like me. And throw yon thief into the well, that his body poison the water. And pluck out the heart of that lovesick girl, to put in my caldron; she needs no heart, for she has beauty. Strike the wanderer lame, that he can hardly crawl on, and yet not rest for pain. And I will send the sleepers dreams to make them blush before themselves and commit horrors in their frenzy. Vengeance, vengeance upon all mankind! All mankind in my power at night! forfeit to me! abandoned to me!

"Now carry me to yonder rock. I want thee no longer. Thou art not daring enough for me. Only bring me the doe that is just emerging from the copse. I want its blood for other fiends. Go! I am sick of thee."

She sat on the black rock, in a pathless wilderness, and listened.

"We weep!" murmured the brooks. "Look! we weep. Help us! we must wander forth, we must pass by mills and mines, by human dwellings and by human misery, till the mighty river bears us captive to the bitter ocean. Turn us

back ! turn us back to our sources, to the sweetness of springing into existence, to our mysterious origin ! ”

She grinned and seized one of the little brooks, impeding its current.

“ I cannot ! ” wailed the brooklet. “ I cannot stem my current, I cannot flow back. Oh, how wretched I am ! let me go ! thou hurtest me cruelly ! do not stop me ! ” But she held it firmly. Then it took a desperate leap and dashed itself into unfathomable depths.

“ Move me,” said the rock, “ move me ! I have stood here hundreds and thousands of years, in sunshine and snow, tempest and drought, move me but once ! ” She put out her finger like a magnet and drew the rock from its place. It tottered and fell and was shattered into a deluge of fragments, breaking trees, and burying a whole village under its ruins.

“ Let me go forth,” said the lake. “ I am sick of repose. I want to be terrible for once ! ”

She stretched out her hand, and the waters rose in a flood and burst their confines, sweeping across fields and towns, and devouring all that came in their way.

“ There,” smiled the witch, “ that’s the way to exterminate the human vermin. Wretches ! ”

“ Hear me,” said the mountain, “ hellish fire rages in my bowels and consumes me. I am weary of it. I will send forth those hungry flames.”

She removed the earth from the top of the mountain, dug up fragments of rock and threw them down into the valley. “ Now,” she cried, “ free thyself ! ” she stamped her foot on the ground. A vast gulf yawned ; flames, stones and seething metal shot upward with gigantic force, and began to flow down in glowing streams, turning the mountain into a gray desert, and reducing towns and villages to ashes.

"I will stand elsewhere," said the tree. "I feel so cold up here, and bloom later than the trees in sheltered places."

"I'll make thee warm and blooming," cried the witch, pulling it up and brushing the clouds with its branches till lightnings flashed and the tree in her hand burned, smoked, and crackled like a torch. She flung it into the forest, clasped her arms round her crossed knees, and watched the conflagration.

"How beautiful I must be in this light," she thought, passing her hand over her limbs, and shaking out her long hair that seemed golden to her.

"Very beautiful ! very beautiful ! very beautiful !" the echoes repeated from every side, as a host of fiends came flying toward her and whirled around her in marvelous shapes. They bent before her and laughed and sang and howled ; and she stood and looked on in silence at the tumult, greater, stronger, fairer, than they, beloved by the prince of darkness, unequalled in aught on earth or in hell. Warm, soft vapors arose and flowed around her limbs, enhancing their beauty, till she felt a sweet delight in her own loveliness. The rapture of this night was her reward for the ineffable tortures she had undergone in order to become the greatest sorceress of all the world, whom hell was forced to serve, whose power knew no bounds, whose passion for evil and for the enjoyment of evil was insatiable and yet continually satisfied, unlimited, and affording ever new scope to her immense powers of imagination. The poor lost woman who had killed the beloved man's babe among the storm-tossed heather, whose hair had turned gray within a few hours, who cried out in her secret cavern and cursed all mankind for turning from her in horror ; she had passed a weary space of time, suffered incredible pangs, committed heinous deeds, and signed infernal contracts, before she

had become the mighty sorceress at whose feet hell crouched, who could pace earth and sky as though they were a carpet, and attain to perfect beauty by her own effort, as nature does. She felt immortal, alternately incorporeal and fascinatingly beautiful. She gazed self-complacently at the giddy ring whirling and ever changing before her, while the vapors played around her like a warm bath, and made her appear still more dazzling, more charming to her subjects. A measureless pride swelled her heart ; her brain emitted rays of light ; the mountain she sat on grew higher and higher, and lifted her to the stars ; the harmonious tones that flowed from her lips vibrated so strongly that the air trembled, trees shook and fell, rocks burst asunder, and flames darted forth. She had revenged all the wrong and ignominy of her life upon sinful, miserable mankind ; she had led scores of human creatures astray, who were her slaves now, trembling as much before her as before the chief of fiends himself. In hours like this, she felt herself the very soul of creation, and when the chief boasted of his superior power, she laughed him to scorn, and would not remember that she had been weak, that she had tortured herself to shake off her mortal love together with her mortal form, to belong to herself rather than to him, to exist independently like an elementary power.

“I only made use of thee !” she cried to him ; “see, how thou crouchest before me now, how thou kissest the soles of my feet ! I am more mighty than thou ; for *beauty* is mine, which makes thee quail, since thou hast lost it forever. See, how lovely I am, and yet not thy own ! I rise above thee and belong to myself. Fret not ! Shriek not ! Do not writhe so horribly ! Thou hast given me power, and now I crush thee and all thy hell under my feet. Thy members forsake thee, because my beauty dissolves and

destroys thee, because the hell within me is greater than thy fire, through which I can walk without singeing a hair of mine. I think, I speak, I feel, I taste what I will. Thou must serve me as the others must, though thou say that thou hast given me life. Higher! I will rise higher. The mountain shall grow faster, that carries my beauty and my omnipotence. And it shall cover itself with fresh verdure, so that I can strew rime upon it merrily—white, biting rime which destroys what strives to live. Rime, rime! Fall down upon leaf and flower, and smite them with hellish cold. Rime, rime! Fall upon human hearts, sever what loved, give to perdition what hoped for salvation, lead into sin what aspired to be pure. Rime, rime! Fall upon all happiness, poison it as my breath does the flowers; crush it, break it, trample it, rend and scatter it, as I have crushed, and broken, and trampled my being, scattering it into the universe so that the whole universe engendered me anew, a sublime concretion of its power!"

Ulla lay for eight days and eight nights in motionless torpor, like a corpse. If people had found her on her bed of ashes, they would infallibly have buried her; for her breath would not have stirred the lightest feather; her heart stood still; consciousness and feeling had left her. Bats and owls flew in and out, regardless of the corpse on its couch of ashes. The skulls grinned around her; the skins flapped gently in the draught; the moon rose and set, and threw its white light on the motionless form with the wide-open, brilliant, sightless eyes that never moved, intent on inner visions.

And above the opening in the roof, new life stirred gently after the spring storm; buds peeped out, heather and grass grew green, snowdrops sprouted up and nodded their delicate little heads as purely and innocently over the sleeping

Ulla, as if an angel were reposing below and dreaming of paradise. Leverets gamboled about the spot and made love to each other in the moonshine. A first butterfly skimmed gleaming across the heath. The blackbirds began to whistle, and the titmice to twitter in an ecstasy of delight. And beneath the leaves on the ground there was a stir among numberless little beings bent on germinating and living. True, a late rime came, as though at Ulla's call, and tried to make ugly havoc, but the spring sun was superior to it, rousing and comforting the crestfallen little shoots and making green again whatever had turned black.

In one of those nights Ulla's spirit hovered over the churchyards and forced the dead to rise and answer her questions from the reed. She conjured Temorah's mother, too, and demanded the child of her that Temorah would not give her. A sound like sobbing and sighing stirred the reed, and the dry grass rustled strangely.

"Thou shalt never have it," said the dead woman : "never ! It is mine ; I have claimed it. My poor child, my poor child ! Temorah, my poor child ! Why art thou so cruel to wake me, that I must thus behold my child ? Alas, alas ! Let me go !—let me return to my grave, where I must not see her ! My child, my child !"

"What shall become of thy child ?"

"Reedgrass and weeds."

"And of thy child's child ?"

"Ashes, ashes, ashes !"

The dead woman vanished in a lake of her own tears, and Ulla laughed till the mountains echoed her mirth.

"I am happier than the living and the dead !" she said. "I have power and beauty and splendor, and no heart !—no heart !"

CHAPTER XIV.

UNA.

"UNA is better!" shouted the vicarage children. "Una! Una!" cried the twins, scampering about on very straight, stout little legs, and evidently proud of being able to jump so high. "God make Una well!" cried the one. "Una all right!" chirped the other. And then they danced about again, while the three elder children ran off to decorate the drawing-room and the breakfast-table with catkins and violets. For Una was coming downstairs in her white flannel dressing-gown with the plaited cambric collar and pale pink ribbons, her cheeks faintly tinted, her beautiful eyes radiant with happiness, passing her long glossy plaits, also tied with pink ribbons, through her slender fingers. Leaning on Martyn's arm, she walked to the head of the stairs, where he took her somewhat arbitrarily in his arms and carried her down, placing her in the big arm-chair before the chimney, and tenderly spreading a soft woollen shawl over her knees.

"You are not faint, my love?" he asked, when she leaned back smiling, and looked out into the young verdure with half-closed eyes. The children pressed around her and filled her lap with violets.

"Oh, how beautiful, how very beautiful, Martyn! I have never seen such a lovely spring."

"Ay, my love! Fields and woods grow green a month earlier than usual for your sake, to make you well again."

"My preserver!" whispered the young girl, drawing Martyn's hand to her lips. He bent rapidly down to her, just as Mrs. Gwynne came in with a large bunch of green

twigs which her younger sons had given her. How the last few months had aged the stately woman ; even her present joy seemed faint and tremulous and uncertain, like the light of an altar lamp. Her heart was slow of belief, for she had schooled it night after night and day after day to submit to the impending loss. Her eyes wore the agonizing look of a drowning man's when he perceives the approaching lifeboat, but calculates the distance and his own failing strength. Gwynne looked much more hopeful when he came in ; his gait was elastic again and his figure erect.

"Let us give thanks to the Lord !" he said, with radiant eyes. They all knelt down, and he breathed a short, fervent prayer, while the birds sang and the sunlight glittered out of doors. His three sons had come in softly with Missy, who brought some cordial for her darling to drink. The three younger children knelt by their father, and even the twins had dropped on their knees beside Gladys and clasped their chubby little hands. The servants, who had just come in to announce breakfast, knelt down near the door, and thus the whole household celebrated Una's recovery with grateful hearts. The only one who did not look glad was Martyn. In spite of all his exertions—his really ingenuous treatment of Una—he was not confident of her recovery, and watched her movements with such anxiety as though he saw no particular reason for rejoicing.

Morgan's face had grown handsome and manly. No trace of boyishness was left in it. His grave eyes, strongly resembling his father's, betrayed the struggles of that long winter, and there was no sign of coming spring in them yet. He joined but sparingly in the general gladness, and often glanced across the room at Martyn to gather confidence from his looks. The father and son had had many a long talk in the study, but they had always parted troubled and

dissatisfied, and Gwynne had told himself with a sigh that a stronger hand than his was needed to lead his son out of struggle and doubt.

Gladys had acquired that beauty which very young creatures owe to early grief, when their buoyant spirits have been slightly subdued and great bodily fatigue has lent a touching expression to their eyes—eyes that rest in loving anxiety and self-forgetfulness on what they hold most dear on earth. There are female faces that smile and gaze devotedly at others all their lives and thus come to look like pictures of saints to which one is inclined to pray. Gladys had learned to bear many an unjust and hasty word that was spoken to her in the general agitation, with patience; she had learned to endure without venting every sorrow in floods of secret tears. No, she could go on quietly with her occupations now and say nothing of the grief that wrung her heart. Una herself was often fain to ask her pardon, when the irritability of sickness was upon her and poor Gladys could not do anything to her liking, though she tried unwearingly and with touching patience to assuage her sick sister's struggle between life and death.

When love dwells with a family, their characters are polished more beautifully than by other agents. Instead of saying: "It's my way; and the rest are no better than I am!" every one says: "My God! would that I were at last what I ought to be!"

The weather grew more pleasant every day. Una felt better and better, as she glided lightly through the house. Her features were very delicate, her skin very transparent, her splendid eyes had never been so eloquent, for love and agony had dwelt in them. Martyn felt his heart throb when he saw her move among the bright young verdure which a first thunder shower and warm air so quickly lure forth.

Sometimes it rained overnight, and then the tender leaflets glittered in the morning sun and shone like newly washed baby faces. The twittering of the birds, too, grew louder and louder every day, as though they had endless stories to tell of their long migrations. Una mostly sat in an arm-chair by the open door, watching the children at play and listening to Martyn as he talked or sometimes read to her, not much, lest he should fatigue her. And he would not let her ask for any needle-work, affirming that her hands were his, and meant for the sole purpose of lying clasped in his own.

At such times Gladys would discreetly withdraw, and stroll through the park by herself, picking flowers and dreaming, as young girls will dream in springtime when the sap rises and the air is fragrant. She mostly left her hat to dangle from her arm, and the quick round spots of sunlight flitted across her hair and her white gown as she bent down for violets and anemones, or stretched her tall form to reach some blossom blowing on a tree. One day she felt herself watched while thus occupied, and when she looked up Tom stood before her. He had never seemed so handsome to her as he did that morning. She had certainly heard of his being rather wild, but her delicate ears had been guarded against the grosser truth; and so she looked attentively at handsome Tom, and wondered whether he could really be so very bad.

Tom saluted the vicar's daughter, admiration in his look and gesture, and said he had merely come to ask for news, having been away so long.

"Why, where have you been?"

"Guess!"

"Impossible to guess that. In Ireland? In London? Where?"

"At the bard's. I passed several weeks with Llewellyn. It was a wonderful time ; I learnt a good deal, and forgot so much that I come back a new man with a new will."

Gladys looked into his face with warm interest.

She noticed an expression she had never seen there before, something like good-nature and gentleness. He seemed more modest, too. How was it that he had grown so different, or seemed so different to her on that fine spring morning ?

What Tom thought was plainly legible on his face.

"She's the handsomest girl between Carnarvon and Llanelly, and I wasn't aware of it before to-day ! Where can I have had my eyes ? Why, she's downright stunning ! Suppose I won her and turned steady ? What a thing that would be for my mother !"

"I've found my mother very poorly," he began, his quick instinct telling him that a time of suffering makes young hearts very accessible to other people's sorrows. And indeed, the beautiful eyes before him immediately betokened warm sympathy, which he cleverly enhanced and directed toward himself by saying that he would have no home left if his mother died, and would not know where to go ; perhaps to Australia. He accused himself of not having learned anything serious, because his father had grudged him all proper instruction. Everything had been considered too expensive for him, and his talents had passed unheeded, because he had been awkward in money matters. But now Llewellyn had discovered a talent for writing in him, and so he meant to turn journalist, and would secretly try to develop into a poet and novel-writer.

"I've roamed about the country and seen a good deal, you know. Maybe it was a foreboding of my being destined to write, which caused me to study the people and

their ways. I have lived many a week among the workmen. I know them well, and could, no doubt, write something pretty about them."

Thus he chatted on, and then he made her tell him all the history of Una's sickness, displaying the warmest sympathy for them all. More than once his eyes even filled with tears, and he could not speak for emotion. Gladys did not weep, a sudden feeling of happiness stealing into her heart. Why, Una was quite well again now, and the spring was lovely, and Tom a poet, a genius misjudged, who had studied while they thought him idle, and who loved his mother so very dearly! She hardly knew how long she had stood talking to him, and how slowly she returned to the house, and why she said nothing about that meeting. She only felt as though her flower-garden would be trampled down if she exposed it to view. And so she never told any one that she saw him again next day, and the day after that, and on every following day, until at last he confessed his great overpowering love for her, and she suffered him with a beating heart to steal a first kiss from her lips.

"Gladys," Martyn's voice sounded almost at the same instant. "Gladys. Why are you not with Una? I had been summoned to Toby's, and thought you would stay with Una." His tone was harsh and stern. Gladys shook with terror.

"Bother!" thought Tom, as he saluted the young girl and disappeared.

"What were you about here with that man?" asked Martyn.

"I?" Gladys was as red as a poppy—so red that the tears started to her eyes.

"He is not a man with whom a young girl ought even to talk."

"Why?"

"Because he is a bad man."

"He has been slandered!" gasped Gladys, feeling as though the veins at her throat must burst.

"Slandered!" cried Martyn. "He is so depraved that no decent man salutes him, and the workmen shrug their shoulders about him. What have you to do with such a man?"

He who thinks to wrench love from a young girl's heart by abusing the object of that love is sadly mistaken. You know the story of the young girl whom they told that she could not marry a certain suitor because he was a drunkard. "But if he can't help being so thirsty!" she replied.

Gladys thought something similar, when Martyn said suddenly, "If your father knew of this, it would grieve him more bitterly than Una's sickness did at its worst."

"But my father is so charitable and forgives every sinner!"

Martyn could not help smiling, but he quickly recovered his gravity. "There is a long way between forgiving a sinner and suffering him to approach the most sacred treasure one possesses," he returned.

Gladys felt her heart grow heavy; the burning flush on her cheeks had given way to sudden pallor. She saw herself involved in a heavy, endless struggle, perhaps with all the family. She would have begged Martyn not to betray her, but she was too proud to stoop to such a request.

Thus they went in to Una, whose face brightened at Martyn's approach, but who cast an uneasy look at his clouded brow. Missy rose to leave them.

"Please, Missy, I want to speak to you. Toby is not very well," he added, turning to his betrothed and not looking at Gladys, who felt her lips throb. For a long, long

while Missy and Martyn paced the big avenue, stopping repeatedly and then walking on again. Missy resolved to speak to Mrs. Gwynne, but not to the vicar, if that could be avoided. Meanwhile Una tried to draw Gladys into conversation, but failed in consequence of the girl's abstraction, and finally sank back silent and weary into her arm-chair. She felt unequal even to the fatigue of waiting so long.

At last Martyn came back alone. Gladys ran out to look for Missy. She did not find her old governess in the garden, but she met her little sisters with two poor women, and was detained a long while. Then she told herself that the information must have reached her mother by this time, and she hated Martyn.

"Gladys," said Mrs. Gwynne that evening, after the young girl had vainly studied every face during the day, "Gladys, my child, come to my room with me; I must speak to you."

Gladys followed her with heavy feet and a quivering heart.

"My child! You shall never become Tom's wife while I live. Do you hear, my child? You dare not love that man! Some day you will feel bitterly ashamed of having suffered your pure heart to stray toward him. I shall never speak of this again, as it has ever been our custom when I have laid a command upon any of you. You know from experience that nothing ever shakes my will. Your walks in the park will cease for the present, until I feel that I may trust my daughter again, and need not fear her meeting a lover behind my back like a serving maid. You have placed no confidence in me, and now, I am sorry to say, I can no longer place any in you."

Gladys lay upon her knees and cried as if her heart would break. Everything seemed shattered; her love, her happi-

ness, her intercourse with her mother, which had really been ideal. She felt miserable, despised, cast off, and shed burning tears through all that night.

Mrs. Gwynne was in earnest. She had held the reins of her household with a firm hand and did not mean to slacken them. She looked upon her daughter's suffering as a beneficent spring storm, which would leave her the fairer and more blooming.

Next morning Gladys came downstairs with pale cheeks and sunken eyes, and slipped into the breakfast-room so quietly that her parents, who were pacing the terrace, did not perceive their child, and never guessed that she heard their conversation word for word.

"Ay," said Gwynne, "we must accept it as a humiliation from God, that our child has gone thus astray. Tom is a notorious scoundrel, and my only hope is that he will deliver Morgan from Kathleen and cure him of his infatuation for her by betraying his own relations to the unfortunate girl."

Gladys' heart stood still.

"Morgan will not listen to me," Gwynne continued, "But God will open his eyes one day, and that, I hope, before it is too late. He must not hear aught of this, however, or he will be tempted to lay violent hands on Tom which would not occasion any loss to society, but would certainly kill poor Edleen. You will watch over Gladys, I suppose?"

"Of course I shall."

The family assembled round the breakfast-table. Gladys was busy with some flowers and had no hand free for Martyn, nor did she hear when he spoke to her, but answered Freddy, who required some important information. Martyn turned away, resolved to wait patiently till he should

be taken into favor again. He saw regretfully how haggard Gladys looked, and he longed to comfort her. But there was no help for it, just as there was none for the clouds either that suddenly gathered in the sky and proved the harbingers of a three days' pouring rain. It was hard to be tied to the house and yet to conceal from Una that they were not on speaking terms.

At the end of the third day, Una complained of a headache. The parents were surprised at Martyn's look of alarm; they thought it quite natural that the unpleasant weather should make Una's head ache. During the night the pain abated a little; but on the following morning, when a cold storm shook the blossoming trees, she thought she had never suffered such tortures. She could not lie or sit still, but walked to and fro, wringing her cold hands and moaning. At last she flung herself on the ground before her father and pressed her face against his knees.

"My head feels as if it were locked in a vise! I suffer horribly!"

She rose to her feet and staggered. Martyn and Gladys sprang toward her to prevent her from falling. But she drew herself away from them almost impatiently.

"Let me go! let me go! I must move about! I can't keep still!"

Morgan laid his hand on Martyn's shoulder and looked up at him interrogatively. Martyn shook his head, and two great tears fell from his eyes. He compressed his lips and bent his head. The next instant he drew Una's hand through his arm with a reassuring smile, and walked up and down with her, past the lamp and firelight, and back into light again. At times Una laid her head upon his shoulder and moaned aloud, but she still walked to and fro until the night was far advanced. Her parents and Missy, Gladys

and Morgan, sat about the room in silence, their heavy hearts foreboding the approach of danger. When Gladys happened to push a little book off the table, Una all but screamed :

“What a noise ! Like the report of a gun !”

She pressed her hands against her temples. A moment later she complained of the storm's howling so dreadfully ; she could not bear the din any longer ; she must go mad if it would last till daybreak.

“If Ulla, the witch, were here, she would lay it with her spells,” she said smiling, but the smile brought on poignant pain, and forced a groan from her lips.

At last she threw herself on the carpet and writhed with agony. Martyn and Morgan exchanged glances. They quickly lifted the half-unconscious girl in their arms and bore her upstairs to her bed. There she lay with closed eyes and scarlet cheeks, and talked and moaned incessantly. No one moved, as the slightest sound made her scream with pain. Morgan signed to the others to pull off their shoes, and fetched his mother the soft slippers she had not worn since Una's recovery. As to Missy, she was never heard ; the children had always affirmed that she had felt soles to her shoes.

By and by the pain passed away, and Una lay wrapt in pleasant fancies night and day. But her face grew hourly more emaciated, her eyes more hollow, and her lips so thin that they no longer covered her teeth. Mrs. Gwynne, Missy, and Gladys only lay down on a sofa in the adjoining room, to rest for a quarter of an hour at a time, or went to bathe their hands and faces. Martyn sometimes slumbered in his chair when Una was quiet, but he never stirred from her bedside.

She lay thus for three weeks, a happy smile on her face,

fancying herself among beautiful meadows, with heavenly angels around her. Then she took a tender leave of all, that happy smile still lingering on her face.

She repeatedly took Martyn and Gladys' hands and joined them together. "Martyn and Gladys!" she whispered contentedly. The two had fixed their eyes on Una, and did not look at each other. Martyn had not again spoken to Gladys, except to give her medical directions, when she would bend her head, with its crown of plaits, like a sad and offended queen whose dignity forbids her looking sad and offended. Gladys had indulged in floods of tears during those last days and nights before Una's new attack; she had cried till she could cry no more for headache, and till her eyes were too sore to move in their sockets.

"So easy, so easy!" whispered Una. "Dying is as easy as playing with children. For, you see, they all beckon to me from their gardens, and cry, 'Fly! fly! Your wings are growing! Fly like a morning cloud!' Don't you see how they beckon? Oh, pray, don't hold me back! Gladys darling! Come here into my arms! Be a comfort to our father and mother and Martyn! Be their comfort, their light, their sun! They beckon, they beckon! It is so bright over there, so lovely! Don't you see how the great light beams down upon us? Don't you see the blissful faces? They smile and smile. I must go to them. I cannot stay. It is too dark for me down here. I shall stand up there among them. Father, you will be the first to follow me, long before all the others. Martyn and Gladys must wander about in the dark still, and love each other very, very dearly. But I shall wait. I shall wait for you all. Missy will come next. Morgan, my darling brother, be strong, be good, and leave the bad girl to her

bad friend. She is no wife for you. Leave her to Tom and take Winnie, little Winnie. Morgan, I love *her*. Send for her, when I am gone ; she is to look upon me once more. But not Kathleen, not Kathleen ; she is a bad girl ; leave her to Tom, who is even worse than she. Morgan, my darling brother, you will grow to be such a good man. When our father has come after me, you will preach from his pulpit, and Winnie will be your wife. I see it all. You will take Winnie to live here, will you not ? Kathleen ill-treats her and spoils her beautiful character. She is to have no teacher but Missy, Morgan, and my friend Llewellyn. Give Llewellyn my love. Tell him he must make a beautiful song in my memory and teach Winnie to sing it with her bird-like voice. Mind you bring Winnie to look at me when I am gone ; and give her my legacy, the Bible Morgan gave me. Tell her I understand her and know what she suffers. Will you tell her, Missy ? Nay, let me go, let me go ; they beckon, and you hold me back with your love ! "

She ran on in this strain, almost without interruption. She never once recovered her consciousness, never once recognized those who surrounded her couch, although she talked to them incessantly. If the person she addressed approached her, she did not look up, and spoke to some one else. What work this term of suffering wrought in every one of them, later events will show. But it bore fruit to them all, for to those who love God even sorrow is blest.

The very children, who were permitted to come in at times, looked grave and paced the garden like old people, *exchanging* their ideas about death and eternity, until a butterfly or a squirrel transported them with delight, and their joy at the good things of this earth burst forth involuntarily.

It was at sunrise, after a night of feverish struggle, that Una bowed her head and closed her beautiful eyes forever. As they knelt around her, weeping low and quietly, Gwynne's deep, firm voice rose above them :

"The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord."

But that evening he had an asthmatic attack which alarmed the family so greatly that they had no time to think of their own exhaustion in the presence of this new afflicting care.

Next morning Missy led Winnie into the death-chamber. Gladys had just strewn the whole bed with flowers, and Una lay under them like a fair white bride, smiling. A roseate hue almost stole into the pale, cold cheeks, as the sun shone through the closed blinds. Missy took the child on her lap, and the little thing stared with big eyes at Una's lashes that threw such black shadows on her cheeks, at the white lips with their immovable smile, and the emaciated hands that could not hold a flower now.

"But she is with the dear Lord, isn't she? How can she be here as well?" whispered Winnie.

"She left her body here, like a garment she needs no longer; for she will have a much fairer one, with wings to it, in heaven. And she bade us tell you that you must be good and very patient, and pardon those who hate you, because they are unhappy themselves; and then, one day, she will call you. She will call us all—all, and then we shall leave our earthly garb behind and fly into her arms."

They sat there a long while. Gladys stood at the foot-end of the bed, no longer weeping, almost reflecting her sister's peaceful smile in her own pale face.

Morgan came in and looked into Winnie's sweet eyes and serious little countenance. His gaze was a very earnest one.

Did he think of Una's bequest while he held Winnie's little hand in his ?

At that instant Kathleen slipped into the room and began to weep aloud.

"Let us go," Winnie entreated ; and Missy took the child away, feeling that so noisy a manifestation of grief would destroy the peaceful impression she had received.

Then Kathleen stood between the brother and sister, who fixed their tearless eyes upon her, the hearts of both throbbing with the same unspoken question : "And Tom ?"

Kathleen knelt down by the death-bed and wept and prayed, but yet put her hand up to her hair, which fell in thick curls upon her neck and was tied with a black ribbon. Had she been able to read the brother and sister's thoughts at that moment, she would have been less careful of her gown lying in pretty folds about her kneeling figure. When she rose, she embraced Gladys, and blushing offered Morgan her hand ; she even stood a long while after that, lost in contemplation of the dead girl, because she fancied the brother and sister's admiring glances fixed upon herself.

The bells tolled, and tolled, and tolled.

Slowly and solemnly the long funeral-train passed away.

The people had come from all the country round ; none who could possibly go was missing. Gwynne walked between Martyn and Morgan. The younger brothers helped to carry the coffin. Freddy clung to Morgan's hand, while the weeping women sat silently together behind the closely drawn curtains and listened to the heartrending chant that rose from numberless throats and floated—swelled with the pealing of the church-bells—out into the pleasant spring-day. Another minister made the funeral-speech and consecrated the coffin. But though Gwynne's hand shook

when they handed him the first spadeful of earth, he repeated with a loud voice :

“Blessed be the name of the Lord !”

CHAPTER XV.

FALLEN ANGELS.

THE music of the bells floated across Una's open grave, and past the disfigured mound where gentle Nature had covered the pitiless hole left by the missing cross with fairest spring flowers, and far away to the lonely forest home, where Temorah lay deadly sick and faint beside her tiny babe.

How sweet those spring days were, when every leaflet seemed bent on displaying its delight in life ! The beech leaves still retained rims of silvery down in which their buds had been wrapt, while the unfurling oak leaves nestled blood-red against the brown boughs. The ground was strewn with blossoms peeping curiously from their light green cups. The woodruff stood in bloom, and the moss held up its flourishing little shafts and sent its peculiar invigorating fragrance abroad. It was enough to make one drop upon the ground among the sweet exhalations of the forest and forget every earthly woe !

But poor Temorah knew naught of fragrance and nodding flowers, of snowy blossoms and awakening life. Her agony had been so great, her misery and loneliness so cruel, that she even repented at last of having kept her secret so closely, and would have given it to the winds to obtain but a moment's human sympathy and aid.

And yet there was some one in the wide world who thought of poor Temorah. Llewellyn had not forgotten

her. Her beautiful boy was barely three days old when the minstrel knocked at her door.

"Let me in, my child ! You have nothing to fear and nothing to hide from me. I know all, and am mute as the grave."

She trembled so violently that it was some time before she could unbar her door, and on the threshold she fell into his arms and wept aloud, like a child on its mother's breast.

"Ah, a human being ! a living soul ! a voice ! a comfort !" she sobbed. "I was near to die, and I feel so weak, so weak, and so thirsty !"

Llewellyn saw that she was in a high fever, and compelled her to go to bed. During several days he nursed her like a tender mother, seeing to all that was needful and taking care of the child. Amid her feverish dreams she heard him sing her little one to sleep, as he rocked it on his knees. One of his songs impressed itself faintly upon her memory. It ran thus :

"Now don a garb of purest snow,
My fairy of the dell !
And be thy heart as pure as snow,
Then will I love thee well."

"My gown is wrought of blossoms white,
From blowing haw and tree ;
My heart is pure and sad, my love,
And ever yearns for thee."

"I'll see thee clad in virgin white,
In which the angels shine ;
I'll know thee fit to wear that garb,
Or never call thee mine."

"I made a robe of down as white
As ever angel wore,
Of doves in all the country round,
And sea-gulls on the shore."

"The snow from Heaven is pure and cold,
And brooks no sinful glow ;
And I will test thy bosom's truth,
By decking it with snow."

"I wove a robe of spider-web,
That caught the moonbeam's sheen,
Of maiden hair, and mist and rime,
And drops of dew between."

"And though thy garb reflect the moon,
And shine with rime and dew,
With mist and pallid maiden hair,
It cannot vouch thee true !"

Then passed she over hill and dale
To Snowdon's icy crest,
And strove to lay its snow in folds
Upon her gentle breast.

"Alas, my love, my toil is vain !
'Those folds will never stay !
They melt upon my burning heart,
And roll in tears away."

"Thy heart is hot with fickle fire,
And many an idle vow !
I will not plight my love and troth
To one so light as thou."

"Then will I seek beneath the turf
A cold and lowly bed ;
The snow will stay upon my grave,
When once my heart is dead."

Temorah heard, but hardly comprehended. The song did not seem at all sad to her, because it was about snow, about something cool in the midst of her burning fever and parching thirst.

"Snow," she murmured, "snow, white, cool snow."

Then Llewellyn gave her to drink and hushed her child

to sleep again. It was touching to see the old man's care and kindness.

"Why should I live, unless it be to help?" He walked to the village, bought food and drink, and was gone again before they could trace his steps. But as he was known to change his places of abode very often, people did not question or spy upon the strange old man.

One evening a band of young folks flocked around him, requesting a song. They were miners with their sweet-hearts, and he gazed approvingly at their comely faces all aglow with the light of the setting sun. As he had not taken his harp with him, instruments were produced from all sides.

"Thou land of minstrels!" he exclaimed joyfully. "My beautiful, song-loving Wales, where fair girls bloom in every homestead, and melody dwells in every ruddy lip, how I love thee! Ah, children, I will sing, and you shall join in the chorus. Attend then—

"Banners wave, and blazing hamlets
Tell a tale of deadly fray;
Those who cannot fly will slumber
On the plain till judgment day.

"There's a knight on foaming stallion
Rides in silence through the land,
Blood upon his mail and visor,
Blood upon his mighty brand.
No one ever saw his features,
No one knows his kin or name,
Or the board at which he feasted,
Or the home from which he came;
But they know his noble bearing,
Know the swiftness of his horse,
And his arm's victorious power,
And the thunder of his course.

- " Banners wave—the fray is ended,
Land and stream are red with gore ;
Flames expire, and weary warriors
Seek some hospitable door.
- " Hark ! a voice before the gateway,
Deep of sound, but sweet and free :
' Fairest maid, a thirsty soldier
Craves a draught of wine of thee !'
She descends and bids him welcome,
And her eyes with gladness shine ;
' Noble knight, why turn'st thou from me
While thou quaff'st the sparkling wine ?'
' Maid, my glance engenders horror,
Hate and fear my loathsome mien !
None ere now have heard my accents,
None my baleful face have seen.'
- " Banners wave—the host he routed
Have dispersed with groan and cry ;
They no longer strive to rally,
They no longer shame to fly.
- " ' Though thy face turned men to marble,
And thy glances burned like flame ;
As thou art our greatest hero,
I would love thee all the same !'
' If my features do not daunt thee,
Take me for thy chosen knight !'
Then his lifted visor shows him
Fair and comely, young and bright.
' 'Twas my dream to win affection'
By my warlike deeds alone ;
Valiant maid, those deeds have won thee,
And I claim thee for my own !'
- " Banners wave—the victors triumph,
Broad swords clash and trumpets bray.
Wooded in mail at close of battle,
Silent on his breast she lay."

When Temorah reappeared in the houses where she was wont to work, she explained that she had been summoned to a distant village to nurse a sick relative of hers, who had died in her arms, and whose new-born baby she had brought home with her.

"Why, how would she bring it up?"

"Llewellyn has given me a goat."

This was true. When she had to go away for hours she would lay a bottle of goat's milk beside the child to keep it from starving, and then would try to make up to the little one at night for the day's privations. Sometimes she was obliged to pass to and from her cottage twice a day to look after her child. But Llewellyn had interested Edleen in her, and thus she was relieved in many ways, provided with food and drink, with linen and clothing. Mrs. Gwynne, too, sent Missy with presents and orders for work to assist Temorah in her charitable enterprise. At the vicarage sorrow had not dried up the warm springs of neighborly love, and Edleen was brimming with joy and gratitude because Llewellyn had sent Tom back to her a better man, full of good aspirations. In her happiness she forgot that she had sold her finest diamonds to clear him, that she had made an anxious and miserable man of the contented Lewes. Kathleen heard of Temorah's pretended nephew, and her hatred increased as she saw Tom depressed and sad. He passed a good deal of his time at home now, wasted an immense quantity of ink and paper, indited numberless verses and letters to Gladys, only to burn them afterward, and never looked at Kathleen. But poor little Kathleen thought, with a choking sensation at her throat, how she had sold all her small belongings, her ornaments, even the silk stockings she used to be so fond of, for graceless Tom's sake; how she had gone without all the pretty trifles, the ribbons,

and sashes, and gloves she liked to deck herself with, only to keep Tom out of prison. And this was her reward ! Winnie and Minnie suffered a good deal from her at this time, and, as they knew of no excuse for her bad temper, they began to play her all sorts of tricks by way of revenge. Tom was zealous in abetting them. " Now we'll make her furious ! " they would say, and when tears of hot anger and bitter indignation quivered on her long lashes, her tormentors would burst out laughing, and no punishment could break them off this ugly game. It was a new pastime Tom had invented to cheer the terrible monotony of the so-called respectable life he was now leading. The little girls had never been so naughty ; Tom seemed to detect and develop every evil quality they possessed. Vaughan was surprised at the continual complaints. Hitherto his little ones had always given him pleasure. Now he was often called upon to punish, to banish them from his presence. He felt this deeply, for their birdlike chatter had been his sole distraction of late. Tom was fiendishly pleased to take such a subtle revenge on his step-father, and to torment Kathleen and his spoilt little sisters at the same time. Every day he invented some new trick, and he was so clever at getting out of scrapes by means of ready falsehoods, that angelic Minnie was tempted to try a little fib herself one day. But then Vaughan lectured his children with such passionate eloquence, punished them so severely, and looked so bitterly grieved, that the little ones vowed they would never tell a story again as long as they lived. They saw that their father had grown quite thin and wrinkled, when he took them to his heart again after a week of stern displeasure. Their only consolation had been Maggie, whose dismissal they had effectually opposed with floods of tears. They hardly saw Kathleen now. She had no thought of them.

She roamed about the country in the restlessness of her heart, planning all sorts of terrible revenge upon Tom. She longed to strangle him, to stab him, to see him in the jail from which she had saved him with such infinite pains. Love and hatred struggled so fiercely in her heart, that the poor child knew not where to turn in her indecision and despair. She thought Temorah the cause of all her misery, and lay awake through many a night, busy with schemes of retribution.

By and by the Vaughan family went up to London for the season. Tom poured his ink out of window, presented his paper to his sisters, and was soon immersed in a whirl of pleasures after his own taste. The little ones had masters, and Kathleen lived in a waking dream. Vaughan saw very well that her teaching counted no longer. Edleen shone in her sham ornaments ; she was obliged to open and fill her drawing-rooms, to return visits, to show herself at balls and theaters. Vaughan exacted this from his beautiful wife ; he was proud of the homage she received wherever she went, and at which her lacerated spirit winced.

"I fear," said Vaughan one day, "we shall have to dismiss the coachman, in spite of his good references."

"That's a pity," rejoined Edleen listlessly. "I have never been driven so well as within the last six weeks."

"Ah, but the servants notice continual thefts of linen, silver, harness, and whips, and there are some strong grounds of suspicion against him."

"Well, then, we will dismiss him ; only make no row, Harry," said his wife wearily, turning her delicate face toward him.

"I wonder whether you have remarked the disreputable-looking people that surround the carriage, since the new coachman has entered our service."

"I have indeed remarked and even been frightened at them ; but the coachman looks so respectable with his fine whiskers. He powders his hair cleverly, and there is something genteel in his bearing."

"The whiskers may be false, Edleen, and the references bought of another. Who knows who is hiding with us?"

As he spoke, Edleen felt a shock which made her heart stand still. She looked at her husband. No, he had spoken without any hidden meaning.

She sent for Lewes.

"Lewes !" she gasped, with quivering voice and burning eyes. "Lewes ! the new coachman who is to be dismissed to-day because he steals is Tom ?" She almost screamed the words.

Lewes turned pale and grasped a chair to steady himself.

"Lewes ! Here, take this big diadem ! and those pearls ! and save my child ! Lewes—Lewes, what am I to do ? I feel very ill, Lewes ; I shall leave London at once, for I have terrible pains in my chest, and I will not consult any one but Martyn ; I do not want another physician. I can no longer eat for pains. I have dragged myself to balls and dinner-parties these two months, to be near and to protect Tom. And this is how I protect him, Lewes ; I would I were dead !"

"I would I were dead," echoed Lewes in his heart. Vaughan had lately overwhelmed him with marks of confidence. He was now to reap the fruits of years of faithful service. He felt as if burning coals were being heaped on his head. His lips and tongue were continually parched and his hands and feet icy cold, and he avoided his old friend Owen like his conscience.

However, he sent for Tom, the pretended coachman, and

told him that he was under strong suspicion of dishonesty and would be delivered over to justice without delay.

Thereupon Tom dropped his assumed character, and entreated Lewes to shield and pity him, calling himself a wretch unworthy to live, and crouching at the feet of the head clerk, who tried to drown his indignation and disgust in his wild, unbounded love for Edleen. He kept the culprit confined in his own room till the most pressing debts were paid; but he could not help treating him with such contempt that Tom vowed he would be revenged upon him as upon the rest of them. "Patience!" thought he. "You shall grow wretched in your turn, till you learn courtesy to the destitute and humility to the fallen!"

Edleen breathed more freely when she knew Tom in Lewes's keeping, and left the city without seeing her son.

Immediately on his arrival in Wales, Vaughan visited Gwynne, and was deeply grieved at the change which had come over him. But by and by his friend's gentleness gave him courage to mention the request he had come to make: That Mrs. Gwynne and Missy would take charge of his two little daughters.

"They are the light of my eyes," he said, with quivering lips; "but my wife is so ill, and things have come to such a pass at my house, that I feel very anxious about the children. Kathleen is hardly adequate to the task of nursing my wife. I think my request a monstrous one. But I am in great distress." He broke off, and softly tapped the ground with his boot, trying to regain his self-possession.

"A friend in need is a friend indeed," say the English. Vaughan's request was kindly granted; Missy patiently accepted this new task; Gladys was pleased to have Tom's sisters with her; Morgan thought the children would prove an attraction to Kathleen; and Mrs. Gwynne secretly re-

membered Una's prophecy, and wondered, tremblingly, whether all she had said would come true.

She had cause to tremble, for Gwynne's asthmatic attacks were growing worse and more frequent. He could bear nothing but a loose kerchief about his throat now, and often complained of his hands and feet being swollen. Martyn was called in so frequently that he decided to settle in the place altogether ; he bought a pretty cottage, and was soon in such request that he had little rest by day or night—a good thing for him certainly, as his heart was heavy. He had little hope of saving the vicar, and had been much distressed to detect an incurable disease in Edleen, which heavy sorrow had engendered, and was daily developing. He made it his most sacred task to mitigate the sufferings of these two patients of his.

Gladys still treated him with great coldness, though with respect and frequent recognition of his devotion. She could not forgive him ; and Una's bequest caused them to shrink the more shyly from each other, as neither would seem to remember her words.

Martyn had one particular favorite in the place, Temorah's little boy ; a charming, merry little fellow, who would try to stand on his sturdy little legs, and stretch his arms out to him whenever he appeared. Temorah had been ill and obliged to consult him, and he had cured and comforted her so kindly, even while he guessed her secret, that she had almost shaken off her morbid fear of her fellow-creatures and taken heart again.

The new inmates of the vicarage cried so bitterly at first that their kind friends felt quite anxious about them.

Minnie kept pressing her little hand upon her heart and sobbing as if in pain. They asked her whether she missed her mother, or Kathleen, or her father, or Prinnie ?

"No, no, no," sobbed the child, "my heart's so sore!"

And Winnie put her arms round her little sister and cried quietly upon her shoulder.

At last, Morgan drew the two children into his arms:

"Tell me quite softly what makes you so miserable."

"Maggie!" sobbed the youngest. "Maggie! I *can't* do without Maggie!"

"Maggie's the only person that loves us," said Winnie.

"Maggie, poor Maggie. My heart's so sore, ever so sore. *She* can't do without us either. Maggie's sure to die without us!"

Morgan immediately drove over to Mr. Vaughan's, and when he drew up before the vicarage an hour later and Maggie flew into the children's arms, they were so happy that Mrs. Gwynne began to understand how wretched they must have been at home, and how much cause of anxiety Vaughan had had with regard to their pure little souls. Morgan was pained to remark that they spoke no word and shed no tear with reference to Kathleen, and were rather frightened than pleased whenever she made her appearance. He thought Winnie grown remarkably clever, and marveled at her great talent, her sweet singing. Llewellyn was persuaded to stay all summer at the vicarage, where he cheered the vicar, taught the children, and comforted Mrs. Gwynne; the quiet sadness which pervaded the house never diminished the charm of his presence. The numerous children, too, kept the hearth lively, and Vaughan came often to soothe his sorrowful heart. When Gwynne, Llewellyn, Vaughan, Martyn, and Morgan conversed together, Gladys would listen like a flower turning toward the sun. Her soul unclosed, and took in the great thoughts which stirred these men. As to her love, she bore it silently and patiently, heavy though it seemed, and when her heart threatened to

grow unruly and rebellious, she would go to Una's grave and pray till she was calm again.

CHAPTER XVI.

WITCHCRAFT.

"ARE you fond of Llewellyn, Missy?" queried Winnie.

"Very fond."

"Ah, I'm glad of that! I'm so fond of him myself, I'd have been very sorry if you hadn't cared for him! Daisy loves him, and so do Freddy and Lizzie and the other children."

"Because he is a good, good man."

"But God will not take him from us, will he?"

"I hope not, my child."

"Freddy says God takes all good people to heaven, and that's why he's going to take *his* father."

"Ah, I hope he will not take him yet!"

"Nay, but Missy, he suffers so much."

"True, he suffers."

"Please what is the meaning of a glove?"

"A glove, child?"

"Yes, what does one mean when one gives somebody a glove?"

"The knights used to throw down their gloves to show they meant to fight some one."

"Oh, yes, I've known that a long time. But between women?"

"I think I do not understand your question, Winnie."

"Well, I didn't understand what I saw myself, Missy."

"What did you see?"

"I saw Kathleen standing on the bridge where Daisy has

that bird's nest in the old willow; you know, Missy. There are little birds in it. But they're not all pretty."

"Little birds never are."

"Oh, yes, chickens are; chickens are very pretty as soon as ever they creep out of their eggs; do you remember, Missy, how that one ran about with the shell on its back?"

"Yes, I remember. And what was Kathleen doing on the bridge?"

"Nothing. She never does anything, you know."

"Is it nice and kind of you to say that?"

"No, but it's true."

"Do you know why she does not occupy herself?"

"No."

"Have you asked her whether she feels sad?"

"Of course she feels sad."

"Why so?"

"Because Tom doesn't care for her any more and doesn't want to marry her."

"How do you know that?"

"I asked him, and he said, 'I wouldn't take her on any account; we're both as poor as rats.'"

"And you repeated that to Kathleen?"

"Oh, she had been sad before. She was always crying."

"So she was crying as she stood on that bridge?"

"No, not just then. As she stood there, Temorah came up to her; you know Temorah?"

"I do, very well."

"Temorah took a glove from her pocket and showed it to Kathleen, and Kathleen turned very pale. I saw her."

"Perhaps it was only your fancy."

"I'm not like Tom; I'm like my father. Tom had another father; he isn't my brother really."

"Nay, child, you have one mother."

"Hum!" muttered the child, curving her lips.

"And the glove?"

"Temorah said to her: 'I wish to return your property, and to thank you for adorning my mother's grave.' You should have seen Kathleen's face, Missy; it was quite, quite white!"

"You see, my child, that we two cannot understand what those girls said to each other."

"Ah, but listen!"

"Is there more to hear?"

"Do you think it nice to throw things in people's faces?"

"No, child; who would be so rude?"

"Kathleen was. She threw that glove in Temorah's face. And then Temorah took hold of her wrist till she screamed and writhed with pain. Temorah had turned white too, and gnashed her teeth, and said: 'If you ever expose me to public shame again, as you did that day, I'll kill you!' And Kathleen writhed and moaned: 'I've done you no harm! You've robbed me of everything, everything, everything!' And Temorah said: 'Take it back; I don't want it any more!' and laughed aloud; but so strangely, Missy. 'Ha, ha, ha, ha!' Her eyes didn't laugh, nor did her lips; and Kathleen was frightened. For Temorah's eyes flashed, and Temorah is so big and strong. They hate each other, those two."

"What can a little child like you know about hating?"

"Why, Tom hates my father, and Temorah hates Kathleen, and my mother hates Owen——"

"Hush, child! You must never use that horrible word again. Did you ever hear it with us?"

"No. But that's different."

"Why?"

"At a clergyman's house!"

"I fancy all human creatures should live at peace with one another."

"Missy! We never said a word when Tom burnt our doll, though we might have got him into trouble by telling papa: but mamma is so fond of Tom."

"Well, that was good of you."

Missy was glad to drop the delicate subject with a hasty word of commendation, and to send the children out to the meadow to play. She mused long and deeply on what she had heard, but breathed no word of it to any one. She thought it might prove a means by and by of curing Gladys. For she guessed at once that Tom was at the bottom of the quarrel, and only felt relieved that his name had not been mentioned in the child's hearing.

After the scene witnessed by Winnie, Kathleen had left the bridge and turned into a forest-track which led her by a green copperish lake to Ulla the witch's dwelling. She repeatedly lost her way, for she hardly knew the right direction, and her hot eyes were dim. She wanted to revenge herself—and to ruin Temorah. Of late, Tom's coldness toward herself had increased. He passed most of his time at home now, or at Martyn's. His mother had lain on her knees before him, and once more stirred his better instincts, so that he tried to work. As to Martyn, Tom only visited him in the hope that he would influence Gwynne in his favor, when he should attempt to win Gladys. And Martyn bore his presence like an invalid's. He pitied the unhappy mother profoundly, and had told Tom that he might shorten or prolong her days as he listed. But when one endeavors to soften a bad man's heart, one does not consider that he will employ one's well-meant words in an evil way and use them as new tools to do new harm with.

Kathleen began to feel uneasy as the sunset and shades of night sank down upon the valleys, where lines of lightly rising vapor marked the course of the river. But she would not turn back after coming so far, and was also afraid of losing her way altogether in the forest wilderness. Presently a faint glimmer of light apprised her that she had reached the witch's cavern, and she entered it with timid, noiseless steps. She saw nothing at first but a small fire and something dark crouching on the ground. But by and by she distinguished the shadowy form of a woman and a terrible face illumined by a bluish, flickering flame. She would have fled then had not a deep melodious voice addressed her.

"Whither wilt thou fly so fast, maiden, when thy heart has led thee hither; thy poor frightened little heart, which flutters in thy breast like a bird?"

"They say, mother, thou canst read and disclose the present and the future."

"Ay, my child, at times, a little, when the Great Spirit is willing that I should. Sometimes he will not reveal his secrets to me. But who knows how much he may do for the sake of beauty such as thine!"

"I am not beautiful; I am no blessing to others, and a burden to myself. I wish you would tell me that I shall die very soon."

"Die, because thy lover has turned from thee? Die, because thy heart is not satisfied? Die, while the sun shines, while thou art young as day, fair as sin, charming as a doe, with eyes like deep lakes and lashes like clustering heather?"

"Of what use is it all to me, mother, when I am so unhappy?"

"Has thy young falcon soared so far from thee?"

"He never looks at me now."

"Have others snared him?"

"How do you know that, mother?"

"I know everything under the sun and the moon, everything that stirs in the human brain. I also know that thou wouldst be avenged."

"I? Avenged? I would indeed!"

"But vengeance is no easy shaft to wield; it often rebounds, wounding him that threw it, and I would not see so sweet a maiden hurt. Thou art beautiful, maiden. Why did he forsake thee?"

"I do not know; I only saw them together; I heard her say: 'Come! come to my cottage!' and the pain all but killed me."

"Was she, who thus robbed thee, wife or maid?"

"A maiden, fair and beautiful; ah, so beautiful, so tall—much lovelier than I am!"

"Thou shouldst immediately have taken earth from a spot where two dogs had fought and thrown it on her foot-marks; then he would not have given her another thought."

"And he is not ashamed of his untruth. He tells me she is more beautiful than I."

"How cruel! And thou thirstest for revenge, my beautiful child?"

"Yes, but I fear it too."

"Well, we will choose such a mode of revenge as shall destroy thy rival and bring *him* back to thee. He shall love thee so passionately, so passionately, that he shall tremble when he but beholds thee; that thou shalt have it in thy power to torment and madden and play with him. Will that delight thee?"

"It would indeed. Then I should be revenged on him as well."

"He shall rush after thee like a mountain torrent, crouch before thee like a serpent, hover round thee like an eagle, and thou shalt laugh at his torture."

"Yes, mother, yes!—help me to this!"

"Is he young and handsome?"

"Very young, very handsome, and very wild."

"Has he father and mother?"

"Yes and no; his father is dead, if you must know that."

"Ay, ay, I know; he has a step-father, has not he?"

"How do you know?"

"I know everything, my child. And so thou give me time, I will tell thee the initial of thy rival's name. Is it not a T?"

"Yes, it *is* a T."

"Thou seest that naught is concealed from me."

"How do you come to know so much?"

"I know more. I know that she has a child."

"A child!—*his* child!—*his* child! Ah, now I understand what has estranged him from me!"

"Nay, that is no reason, sweet innocent."

"If she has a child?"

"Nay, my beauty, he can come back to thee all the same, especially if the child cease to be."

"How shall it cease to be?"

"I have raised the ghost of the dead mother, the mother of the girl T., you know, T."

"Yes, yes, I know; did she come from hell?"

"She did, child, straight from hell; and she wailed: 'My child! my child!'"

"She wailed?" Kathleen trembled from head to foot; the witch stole a lingering glance at her.

"And I asked; 'What shall become of thy child?'—

‘Reed-grass and weeds!’—‘And of thy child’s child?’—
‘Ashes, ashes!’—So spake the mother of the girl T. and
wailed bitterly. If thou wouldst hear her to-night, I’ll call
her into the rushes here, and thou canst question her thy-
self.”

“No, no, for Heaven’s sake do not call her, do not call
her! I should die for terror!”

“Nay, what cause hast thou to fear the mother?”

“I—I—have cut—have cut *his* name into her cross—to
punish her daughter——”

“And his name begins with T?”

“How do you know?”

“The dead woman told me. She felt it all. Each cut of
thine was a cut into her heart, and her daughter has had no
peace from that day.”

“How *can* you know?”

“I went to see her, child.”

“The daughter?”

“Yes. My mirror had shown me that she was in distress,
and I went to offer her aid. But she would not accept it.”

“She would not? Why not?”

“She thought to bind him whose name begins with T,
the more closely to herself.”

“I see.”

“She shall find herself mistaken. He shall hate and dis-
card her. Hast thou never gone to look upon his child?”

“Never.”

“No? That surprises me.”

“Why?”

“’Tis a strange feeling, after all. *His child!* Does it not
thrill thee here?” She had stretched herself to her full
height and laid her bony hand upon Kathleen’s heart.
“Does the thought, *his child!* not quiver and burn in there?”

If ever thou seest that child, thou wilt long to scorch it with thy glances, to kiss it dead. Dost thou not feel that, sweet one, in thy passionate, burning heart?"

Kathleen's cheeks were hot. Ulla did not take her eyes off her for a single moment.

"Do not speak like that. I shall go mad," murmured the young girl.

"I see a great passion within thee. Thou art a noble creature, and thy blood courses through thy veins like new wine. 'Twas cruel to torment thee thus. He knew not what he did, what the woman was with whom he trifled, what burning thoughts were raging behind her fair young brow. He meant to tease thee like a kitten, and did not see the tiger in thy nature, the vengefully crouching tiger that would leap upon and destroy him."

"I would not destroy him. I have saved him many a time."

"And this is his gratitude. Shall I curse him?"

"Oh, no, no, no!—do not! Curse but the other woman, and the child, and whatever he loves beside me!"

Ulla watched the young girl with great earnestness, and when she thought her sufficiently excited, she began to stir the fire and to whisper strange charms and cabalistic words over her caldron, walking round it the while with noiseless steps, as though she were flying; the motion of her feet was hardly visible; her arms seemed to bear her along, and the firelight that fell full upon her from under the wavering of the caldron, steeped her in lurid radiance. The inner recess of the cavern seemed replete with black night and damp mold. Kathleen thought it looked like a gate opening into hell, and her awe was not lessened when a pale, magic light began to spread in it. As she stood with her back toward the entrance of the cavern, she had not noticed the rising of the

moon, which shone through the cleft in the roof, but fancied the sudden radiance a result of witchcraft. Her teeth chattered with terror. It was such a strange light, after the dense darkness that had reigned there, doubly white and cold through its contrast with the fire and the glowing fleshless face hovering about it like a dark moth or a bat. The girl's heart throbbed audibly; but the despair that had drawn her hither was stronger than her fear, especially as Ulla had wrought her passions to their highest pitch before she proceeded to work her charms. Kathleen stood motionless, hardly breathing, with the firelight flickering on her black lashes and nervously parted lips. Ulla seemed to have forgotten her presence, and to be wholly occupied with the caldron, from which a low sound of seething and a column of thin blue steam arose.

"Be sweet as honey, hold fast like honey," sang the witch, taking some stiff white honey from an earthen jar and flinging it into the caldron. "Be so sweet that every bee must seek thee, every fly be caught by thee, all that touches adhere to thee."

Then she lifted a stone slab from the ground and disclosed a hole in the rock in which a great swarm of ants was imprisoned. She dashed a few drops from the seething caldron over them, gathered the scalded ones into it, and covered the rest up again.

"As the flesh smarts with your sting, he ye touch shall smart with the sting of love. Boil, boil, and mix your acid with the sweets of the honey. As your sting wounds, as your acid corrodes, wound and corrode the heart that comes near ye!"

She was still circling round the fire.

Presently she took a knife, stuck it into the ground, and bound a ribbon around it.

"See," she said, "here is the girl T., who braves us, who would stay our charm. We will subdue her. Ha! thou resistest? Thou will not submit to our power?"

"Sweet and acid! boil together,
Froth, like passion wild and vain,
Heave, like hearts in sin and sorrow,
Heat, like souls in love and pain!"

"What? thou will not yield, thou lost one, erring spirit, blackened soul! I fan the flame like the whispering wind, like the breathings of early spring, like an eagle swooping down upon his prey when the lake lies calm beneath the moonlight. Go, serpent, hellish fiend, avaunt!" She threatened the knife with her fist. "Go whither thou art bound. Leave him, loose him, hate him, hurt him and expire! I fan the flame of expectant impatience with the breath of love. I blow upon it like the wind in the forge when iron is heated, like the storm in the chimney when he seizes the fire and exultantly bears it on high."

She took a fresh, leafy hazel-twigg and trod it under her naked feet, turning it about with incredible rapidity, and stripping it of its leaves.

"As thou writhest under my feet the lover shall writhe; as I pluck thy leaves from thee, all he holds dear shall be snatched from him; as thou art bare and empty now, he shall stand bereaved, sick with yearning and regret; as thou tremblest, he shall tremble."

She flung the leafless twig into the caldron and circled around it again. Then, heavily sighing and moaning, she put her hand to her heart and seemed to grasp something there, which she dashed into the caldron.

"Ah, the heavy load on my heart! The burden that weighs it down! I cast it from my breast into the seething wave, I shake it off and force it on *him*, heaping it on his

breast and laying it on his brain, to consume his heart as fire consumes the heather, to shatter his mind as a falling rock does a homestead, to weigh down his soul as frozen snow the turf. Away from our heart, deadly burden!—And thou yonder! dost thou still hold up thy head? I will humble thee till thy own shadow makes thee tremble, thy own voice confounds thee, and thy steps go astray. To thy perdition hast thou crossed my path! To thy perdition do I approach thee! Away, thou burden on my breast, away! Heavy though thou be, heavy as black clouds, as churchyard mold, as years of woe, sink from my heart and fall upon his! Away!”

She passed through the mysterious radiance within, disappeared in the darkness beyond it, and presently returned with a splendid, full-blown rose in her hand. She began to shake it and to blow upon it violently, till its leaves fluttered to the ground one by one.

“Fall, fall, fall, sweet leaves! fall like tears, like sighs, like weary steps, like dew, like dust, like ashes, like gold, like fancies. I breathe upon ye from my grief-scorched breast to make ye fade as with the poisonous heat of the desert or the fire of the noonday sun.”

She shook the flower, till but a single leaf remained.

“The best, the dearest, the most precious that the flower of love possesses, her last leaf, which she held fast in storm and drought, in heat and rime, in sunny glare and in darkness, I snatch it from her by force and fling it into the seething, hissing, frothing waves of love, love, love!”

She hung the caldron on a loftier hook, and covered up the fire.

“Grow cool to men’s hands, but not to men’s hearts. Consume them as sickness, hunger, thirst, love, torture, remorse consume—consume! consume!”

She pulled up the knife and threw it into a corner, cast the ribbon upon the glowing embers, where it turned to ashes like a moth, and said :

“While the potion cools, I will tell thee thy fortune, maiden. Come out with me, and I will show thee a speaking flame.”

She took a brand from the dying fire and laid it upon a heap of straw and fagots, heather, roots, and hay outside the cavern. A gigantic flame leapt up and threw fantastic lights upon the rock, where the moon did not shine. The witch gazed attentively at the flame, and began to dance around it with the grace of conscious beauty, singing with a deep voice and watching her shadow as it flitted across the rock. Again her bare feet hardly touched the ground ; she seemed to be borne along by her garments, as they floated on the air like sable wings.

“Fire, fire ! Make known what none has seen but the stars in their orbits, and the wind that comes from measureless distance and rushes past into eternal space. Fire, show thy power ! Ah, I see ! I see ! Oh, maiden, how fearful art thou in thy love and thy hatred ! Thou shalt hold a flame in thy hand and cause it to soar to the clouds. Thou shalt steep spirits in night and souls in darkness, killing with play and laughter. Thou shalt find true love in thy path and meet it with a heart of flint. But he, whom *thou* lovest, he will pursue thee, win thee, torture thee out of love, and love thee out of hatred ; he will dare what none has dared. Thou’lt be satiated for all the rest of thy days, and never more yearn after him for whom thou pledgedst thyself to hell now ; for thy thoughts are fiendish. And thy repentance shall heal whom thou hast wounded, and make them whole who have sickened through thee ; happiness shall spring where thou hast sown misery. But he

whom thou lovest, he shall grow wretched, and ever more wretched, day by day ; he shall sink into a night to which no ray brings comfort, to which sun and moon, dew and fruition are strangers ! He shall trail a heavy chain behind him. Maiden, maiden ! hell is strong in thee, and holds thee through him whom thou lovest ; he will drag thee down to his level, but then he will quit his hold ; for he cannot take thee with him on the path he must tread—and thou wilt not want to be taken. Maiden, maiden, there is a flame in thy hand ! ”

The flickering fire expired, the mellow voice was mute ; the spectral dance, the floating of her mantle ceased.

Ulla took her trembling companion by the hand :

“Come, maiden, we have left that potion to the spirits long enough ; thou canst touch it now.”

She brought a tiny earthen pitcher, and began to pour the mixture into it, drop by drop. Then she took the pitcher in both hands, lifted it above her head, bent back as far as her elastic body permitted, whispered into it, and straightened herself again. Finally she handed it to Kathleen, bidding her rub some drops from it on her palm before she touched her lover’s hand ; then would he love her passionately again ; and if she listed to drive him quite to distraction, she must mix a few drops of the potion with his wine ; but very few drops, else would the consequences terrify and hardly delight her.

“And now we must wait out there till the moon sets, or she will not favor our charm, and withhold her aid.”

Holding Kathleen tightly by the hand, she again stepped out upon the open space before the cavern with her, where the sinking moon flung their shadows distinctly on the rock.

“Moon, go not hence ! ” cried Ulla. “Moon, my friend, why wilt thou leave me ? Haste not thus away ; thou never

sawest a fairer sight than what I hold in my hand. - Moon, moon, haste not thus. Thou art fleet as remorse, coy as a lovelorn maiden, heartless as a thief. Oh, moon, go not hence. Thy rays warm me, thy radiance lights me, thy smile brings me wisdom and joy. I have no friend but thee, and yet thou wilt not stay. Moon, moon——"

But the moon was setting fast, and the first faint dawn tinted the yellow leaves of early autumn with roseate hues, as though the silvery light that had lingered around them were slowly gaining warmth and color.

Ulla dashed the money Kathleen offered her to the ground, and disappeared in her cavern before her visitor could falter a word of gratitude. Confused and bewildered, the girl walked away in the dawning light, and hardly knew how it came that she presently found herself before Temorah's cottage. It looked a peaceful homestead under its clustering roses, a fair and inviting sight in the morning sunshine. Kathleen turned dreamily toward the little house, unconscious of what she wanted or why she crossed the threshold.

CHAPTER XVII.

FLAMES.

TEMORAH had gone down to the river to wash for some of her employers, and Kathleen began to think the cottage quite empty, when she heard a little voice coo within. *Aw! aw! brrrr!* and many more of those wonderful first sounds that form a most delicious vocabulary for mothers' ears and hearts. Kathleen entered the room, but no one was visible and a sudden silence pervaded it. She stood irresolute. Then something pushed against the door of the bed-recess, which had been left ajar, and a rosy little foot

was seen through the aperture. Directly afterward the cosy cooing was resumed, and a sound of three little fingers at least being diligently sucked became audible.

Kathleen softly opened the door, and looking into the shady recess, beheld so marvelously beautiful a little boy that she caught her breath with surprise. Golden locks clustered around a cherubic face which strongly resembled Tom's, with its straight, dark eyebrows, its long, curly lashes, and deep blue eyes, whose pupils dilated in the darkness around them. Two little fingers lay between the moist red lips, but the lonely inmate of the house stopped sucking for a moment to gaze curiously at the strange face. His small hands, one of which clutched some bells, were chubby and dimpled ; his rosy arms and legs, his snow-white throat, round chin and ruddy cheeks, were as incomprehensibly and indescribably beautiful as they usually are with those great miracles we call children—miracles that charm every eye, even if it be not a mother's. Kathleen stood lost in contemplation of the lovely little creature, with a feeling at her heart which she could not have defined to herself or to anyone else ; a frantic joy, and yet a pain so hot and profound that her brain whirled and her eyes grew dim with it.

"Tom's child, Tom's own child," she whispered. For some time the girl and the child looked at each other in perfect silence. But presently the expression of Kathleen's face seemed to frighten the little fellow ; he took his fingers out of his mouth and puckered his lips in a most alarming manner. Kathleen began to fear that Temorah might suddenly come in ; perhaps she was quite near at hand and would hurry up if she heard her boy scream.

The girl shook the bells and snapped her fingers to amuse him—for she could not take Temorah's child in her arms, no, she *could* not !—but her efforts were vain ; the little one

began to cry bitterly, great tears springing from his curly lashes. Kathleen looked about her for something novel, something bright, wherewith to divert his attention. The only thing she saw was a box of matches. "Look here, baby!" she exclaimed, taking them up and hastily striking a light. The child stopped crying, and gazed wonderingly at the small flame, which was reflected in his tearful eyes.

"Another," said Kathleen, cautiously extinguishing the first one with her foot; and the boy laughed and snatched at the flame which she playfully held out to him, and then quickly withdrew again. When the boy laughed, his resemblance to Tom became still more obvious, and thus she procured herself the sweet torture of seeing him laugh again and again, or watching his charming impatience for another flame.

"Thou wilt long to scorch him with thy glances, to kiss him dead," Ulla had said. If she only dared to kiss him. But if he began to cry again, Temorah might come in. Ah, that sweet impatience! He knit his brows exactly as Tom did. "You are lovely!" she whispered.

"M'm, m'm!" lisped the child, pleading for more light.

"And when you learn to speak, you will call him—*What* shall you call him?"

Tom's child. No doubt he was here for hours and hours playing with the beautiful little creature. She did not know that Temorah had barred her door against him, that he had never seen his child, and was not particularly anxious to see it either, lest Temorah should call upon him to acknowledge and provide for it.

But it was the passionately tender mother's greatest care to guard her boy from Tom—to keep him free from all knowledge of his father. She no longer cared about the world; she had forgotten all her misery. She thought of

nothing but her boy, her handsome boy; and every hour she spent away from him was fraught with anxiety and pain to her. She resolved to take him with her to the houses where she worked, by and by, when he should be a little stronger, to avoid that harassing anxiety about him.

Her two faithful friends, Martyn and Llewellyn, frequently visited her, and then there was no end of play, frolic, and delight. Though he could not yet speak, the little lad had a way of expressing his small will very clearly. And he and Temorah made a lovely picture, framed in by roses and honeysuckle.

"M'm, m'm!" lisped the little one, and a new match flared up. The game lasted a good while; match after match was lit, until Kathleen suddenly fancied she heard the floor creak under an approaching footstep. She fled blindly, leaving the door open behind her, and when she saw no one far and wide, she drew a long breath and ran down the meadow, toward the wood, under whose tall trees she presently felt her throbbing heart grow calmer.

At that early morning hour, when the laboring people were all gone to work, no human being disturbed the great, peaceful solitude. Nay, but there was a horse's tramp, and Morgan had nearly galloped past her, when he recognized her with an exclamation of surprise, sprang from his horse, threw the rein over his arm, and walked on by her side, inquiring after Mrs. Vaughan's health and wondering at seeing Kathleen so far from her home. Kathleen felt the tiny pitcher in her bosom, and suddenly appeared extremely silly and childish to herself. Morgan had grown embarrassed and taciturn, and thus they walked side by side for some time without speaking to each other.

Suddenly a misgiving darted through the girl's brain as to whether she had been careful about the last matches she

had lit, and whether she had not dropped some of them on the bed when she retreated so precipitately. She questioned with herself whether she had not better go back and look, when Morgan spoke.

"Dear Kathleen," he said, "my awkward silence is caused by an overflowing heart. I have wished so long and anxiously to speak to you on a matter of great importance to myself, that I cannot find the appropriate words now I have an opportunity of doing so."

"How disagreeable," thought Kathleen. "What am I to do? Such a good match, too. But I don't care for him a bit. He is wealthy, and quite a pretty man into the bargain, that's a fact. But he's so dreadfully good and pious, and he's going to be a clergyman; ugh! a clergyman! That's not to my taste." She was resolutely silent.

Morgan bit his lip and continued in a still lower key.

"Kathleen, I love you like a madman. I ought not to tell you this before I have a home to offer you, and it will be some time before I can do that. Please, dear Kathleen, promise me only one thing: that you will wait a little while before you bestow yourself on anyone."

"A flame in my hand and true love in my path," thought Kathleen. "Ulla said so, and it has already come true. If I were only quite sure about those last matches. She said my heart would be as hard as flint, and he who loved me would grow wretched. That will also come true, it seems." Thus thought after thought passed through her drooping little head, and then came the startling reflection: "Dear me, how must I look? I haven't yet washed to-day."

"I know that it is asking a great deal of you," said Morgan, "thus to beg of you to wait, especially if you cannot feel any interest in me." A quick look from her splendid eyes encouraged him. "I might already have prepared for

my ordination, had not certain circumstances come between."

"How pedantic and tiresome he is," thought Kathleen. "What is his stupid ordination to me? I only wish my hair weren't so untidy."

"You see, Kathleen, I have consumed myself with longing for you. I found no sleep, I used to stray through the forests at night. And now I ask for nothing but a little patience."

"Why, there's nobody wanting to marry me," said Kathleen; "everybody knows that I haven't got a farthing."

"That is nothing to me, my sweet girl. I shall thank Heaven if I may but lay all my having at your feet and shelter you from every ill."

"Dear me," thought Kathleen, "he's read that somewhere. How horribly tiresome he is. You are very kind," she said aloud. "I really don't know how to thank you."

"Don't thank me, Kathleen; only wait, I entreat you."

"Well, perhaps I may, especially if nobody comes," she answered with a ringing laugh. As she spoke, she again thought of the matches. Morgan was silent. So this was all; this was to be his consolation after his hot, honest struggle, his pain, his ravings! He felt himself grow bitter.

"I hope there is no one who dares to offer you his heart without a future, a home, a competency?" His voice quivered with excitement.

"Ah," thought Kathleen, "here we are, jealous of course." And she added aloud: "Maybe I don't care so much about a home; when one loves somebody, one is glad to go begging with him."

"Do you love somebody?"

"By what right do you inquire into the state of my feelings?"

"I have no right, no right whatever. But I entreat you to take pity on me."

"Pity on you?" Again she bent that look upon him, which she knew to thrill his whole being.

"No," he exclaimed. "Thank Heaven, you do not know yet what love is! else my request would not appear so strange to you. Ah, you take a load off my heart with your innocent words! Kathleen, Kathleen, you are a very child still, playing with fire and never suspecting what a conflagration your little hands may cause."

At these words, Morgan saw a strangely troubled expression steal into Kathleen's face. He felt happy to think that his eloquence had moved her at least; he had no suspicion that she was thinking of matches and a real fire.

"I must ask something very impolite," she said, with a deep blush. "What is the time?"

"Past eight. Why?"

"Oh, then I must hurry home." And she thought to herself: "It'll be a long time yet before any workmen go home."

Morgan stood sadly before her, drooping his head and trifling with his rein. The horse put its mouth in his pocket and pulled a bit of sugar out of it. He took no notice. But Kathleen laughed aloud.

"Look there, how cool!" she cried. "That's some one who can't wait. Good-by, good-by! I must be quick." And she fled with a light-hearted laugh.

Morgan stood leaning against his horse, staring at the spot where Kathleen's charming form had disappeared.

Breakfast was always a very silent meal with the Vaughans. Edleen seldom slept much overnight; Vaughan busied himself with his letters and newspapers; Tom never rose in time to share the meal, and Kathleen sat lost in her

private thoughts. The absence of the children was a daily renewed pain to Vaughan, a continual source of regret, and whenever Prinnie stole into the room, he felt his eyes grow moist. How hard the honest man found it to do right! The days passed wearily, except when Tom brought life and gayety with him, and the two women hung upon his lips as though he spoke words of deepest wisdom. They always talked of him; no other subject could divert or interest them.

On that particular morning Kathleen was greatly excited. She had rubbed some of Ulla's potion on her palm, and mixed a few drops of it with Tom's wine, and now she watched for the result with a beating heart. The two ladies and Tom sat together a long time, waiting for the master of the house. Half-an-hour, a whole hour went by. The bells had wrung in the mines, but the sound of the hammers did not rise as usual. Tom pulled out his watch. "Strange!" he said. "I heard no hammering."

"I hope no accident has happened," said Edleen, wearily rising from her low chair.

"Why need it be an accident, sweet mother? Still, it is strange."

Another hour was nearly over when Vaughan came in, looking hot and haggard.

"What is the matter?" exclaimed both ladies at once.

"The matter is that Temorah's cottage has been burnt to the ground in spite of our efforts to save it, and the child she had in her keeping has perished in the flames. The walls are still smoking."

He dropped into a chair. Kathleen was deadly pale. Tom walked to a window and looked out.

"That is not all," Vaughan continued. "Temorah herself——"

"Temorah?" asked Edleen.

"She was washing linen in the river, by the side of Toby's wife."

Tom turned to look at his step-father.

"And?" asked Edleen.

Tom's wandering eyes fell upon Kathleen and did not quit her face again. He must have read very strange things there, for his gaze never wavered from her features while Vaughan spoke.

"Temorah was washing beside Toby's wife," he repeated. "You know she was often gifted with second sight?"

"Yes, I know," said Edleen.

Kathleen bit her lips to bring the blood back to them. She noticed Tom's gaze and felt how white those treacherous lips must have grown.

"Well, she suddenly lifts her head, stares before her across the river, and says quite calmly :

" 'Don't you see? My house is burning and my boy is dead. The bed is blazing. He played with the flames at first and tried to catch them, but he is dead now. He is out of his pain. Don't you see how the flames burst from the windows? Ah, he is dead, he does not cry.'"

"And then she went on with her washing, and they can't get her to leave the bank. She washes and washes, and when they take the linen from her, she pulls leaves off the trees and washes *them*. My men risked their lives to enter the house, but all was burnt to cinders within. They say the boy was lovely, and now it is whispered that he was Temorah's own child."

"Of course he was," said Kathleen involuntarily; and then she grew still paler as she became conscious of what she had said.

Vaughan looked at her. "Whence do you know that?"

"The resemblance."

"Then you have seen the child?"

"Oh, yes; it was always lying out in the meadow."

Out-of-doors the sound of the hammers rose upon the air once more. Daily life had recommenced, and went on in its inexorable needfulness. The Vaughan family made a pretense of breakfasting. But no one could eat. Vaughan took a little bread and a good deal of wine, for he was greatly exhausted. Tom disappeared as soon as they rose from the table. Kathleen complained of a headache and hastened to her room, carefully locking herself in, while Vaughan and his wife sat before the hearth in such deep silence that no sound was audible but the ticking of the timepiece.

"The child was Tom's," said Vaughan at last.

Edleen started. "No, Harry! I entreat you——"

"It was Tom's child, and Kathleen knows it was."

"No, no, no! it is too dreadful!"

"Have you no eyes, Edleen?"

"Then I must provide for Temorah."

"Of course I shall do that, Edleen."

"But she is not incurably insane?"

"I have sent for Martyn. Perhaps he will be able to tell us, as he knows her constitution."

Just then Martyn came in.

"I have seen Temorah," he said. "Tom is with her, but she does not recognize him."

In his agitation he did not consider whether anything ought to be kept secret any longer. To what purpose? When all was irretrievably lost!

Edleen wept.

"Is there no hope for Temorah?" asked Vaughan.

"None. And it will be better for her if she does not

recover her reason. She has suffered enough. Now pitiful Providence has taken the power of suffering from her. She smiles, and sings, and washes. If people had only believed her at once, when she said her house was burning! The child was so lovely."

Martyn had tears in his eyes.

"I believe they did run to her cottage pretty quickly," said Vaughan. "They knew Temorah's second-sight to be unerring."

"The boy was so beautiful that I used to forget my work and everything else when I played with him."

"Poor Temorah!"

"Ah, poor Temorah. It is better, far better for her that she should remain unconscious of her loss."

"But one must take her away from the riverside?"

"On the contrary; one must give her plenty of washing to do, so that she does not think of going home at all."

"But at night?"

"She will walk about a good deal at first, and sleep very little. Cold and wet will not affect her now. She will be very cheerful and contented, and wash indefatigably, and sometimes rock some object or other tenderly in her arms."

Edleen burst into tears anew.

Tom had vanished, and did not show himself for several weeks.

The news of the disaster affected no one so deeply as Llewellyn. He could hardly control himself as he stood before the ruins of the little homestead and of her who had once been Temorah, and who knew him as little as any one else. She smiled, and sang, and washed, and hung her linen out to dry; and when fatigue overcame her, she lay down on her mother's grave and covered herself with leaves.

"It's nice here !—nice and warm ! A nice warm bed !" she would say.

Kathleen was in a state of mind verging on insanity. She hardly ever spoke, for fear of betraying herself as she had done on that first day. What Vaughan thought of her he kept to himself, and only thanked God that he had placed his children in safe keeping. He went over to the vicarage as often as he found time, for he could hardly bear to be at home. It rent his heart to see his adored wife slowly fading, to lock a horrible suspicion in his breast and behave to Kathleen as if he did not think her a criminal. She shrank from him as from a judge, and cursed Ulla bitterly for having played upon her jealousy and suggested the idea to her that she should go and look at Tom's child.

How she would have shuddered, had she seen Ulla searching the ruins of the cottage one moonlit night ! Ulla sought after a particular kind of ashes, and when she found a tiny bone among them, she grinned with unholy delight. She held it up against the moonlight and examined it closely to find out to what limb it had belonged. She also discovered a tiny, half-burned fragment of a small skull ; those were precious troves, and they quickly disappeared in her bosom.

"The child was destined for my prey, I always knew that. Ashes ! ashes ! Ay, ay, thou wouldst not abandon it to me. So I sent the little demon and poisoned her heart, knowing what she would do. She will also fall my prey. She will soon be ripe. She will soon succumb to my power. A little more patience, a very little more patience ! As surely as the sand runs, the river rolls, the sea has ebb and flow, so surely will the little demon who knows how to hate so well, fall my prey. She must only forget her love first. Ay, ay, little witch ; soon, soon, soon, when thou seest thyself cast

out and contemned, thou wilt come to me as surely as the river rolls, the sea ebbs and flows, the moon changes, and the autumn foliage falls! And then I will enslave thee, torture thee, madden thee, make thee a scourge to all mankind. Ay, ay, ay, the wind cuts, the frost chills, the fire purifies. The wind shall lash thee, the frost nip thee, the fire cleanse thee, thy body and soul shall be racked, till thou art ripe, and sly, and strong, and I can leave my realm to thee, little witch!"

Thus murmured Ulla to herself while she gathered the ashes in her hollow hand, and blew away what did not seem to belong to the remains of the child.

Kathleen wandered restlessly about her room of nights and through the forests by day.

"Oh, that I had only confessed at once," she moaned. "But as I was silent then, I dare not speak now, or they will accuse me of arson. Who knows what they think of me? If Tom has seen the cross, I am lost; then he will feel convinced of my guilt. And Vaughan, Vaughan. How he looks at me, how he treats me! I laughed at him the day he spoke to me about Tom; he has not forgotten that. He thinks I have done that deed. Ah me, ah me, how wretched I feel. I have not deserved that, for all my wicked thoughts. Oh, why did I not turn back when I grew uneasy? but I thought Temorah would be there. Temorah alone! What could *she* have done to quench that fire? ah, what indeed?" Thus her thoughts whirled incessantly around one point. Always the same thoughts, always the same. There was no escaping from them. Then she mused that she could never become honest Morgan's wife now, with her heavy conscience and that terrible suspicion upon her, and she grew still sadder. She fancied herself leading a peaceful life at his side, as his loved and honored

wife. "Over ! over !" she wailed. If she had only had a human being to whom she could have unburdened her heart ! But an ungovernable dread kept her aloof from every one, joined to the secret conviction that her story would not be believed.

She roamed about the autumn-seared country, along the seashore, past the copper-green lakes, up to the so-called Devil's Bridge that hangs between perpendicular rocks above a rushing torrent, and does not look as if it had been built by mortal hands. There she leant over, and thought of springing down into the cold, turbulent depth below. But her young body shrank from death, and she wandered on again.

One evening she perceived that she could not get home before nightfall, unless she forded the river, as there was no bridge across it which she could have reached in time. She unhesitatingly pulled off her shoes and stockings, and was about to step into the water, when she felt herself grasped by two strong hands and lifted from the ground.

"Stop a bit, my girl," said Tom's voice. "We've got a little matter to settle between us."

"Let me go ! let me go !" screamed Kathleen. "I won't be kept ; let me go ! I'll have nothing to do with you !"

"But I have something to do with you, my girl, as you shall see directly."

He quickly bore her to a cavern near the lonely bank ; there, in the damp, dense darkness, he flung her upon the ground and set his knee on her chest.

"Now then, sweetheart ! Prepare for sentence ! Come, make a clean breast of it ! Confess your crime !"

"What would you do ? Let me go ! Tom, Tom, I conjure you by all I have done for you, let me go ! What would you do ? Tom, let me go !"

He laid his hand on her throat.

"If you value your life, confess that you set Temorah's cottage on fire."

"No, no, no," cried Kathleen, "I did not!" She had sufficient presence of mind to tell herself that an unprincipled man like Tom would not hesitate to bring her to the gallows.

He tightened his grasp upon her throat.

"I will know the truth," he said coolly, "and I *shall* know it."

"What shall you know when you have killed me," murmured Kathleen.

He waited a while, gazing steadily at the white but resolute face before him. Then he asked once more :

"Did you set Temorah's cottage on fire?"

"No, no, no, I did not!"

"If fear cannot extort the truth from you, love will," hissed Tom, and then Kathleen knew she was lost.

About the same time, Lewes was sitting alone by his lamp, a letter from Edleen before him, in which she entreated him to procure her money. She had none left. She inclosed a letter from Tom, threatening to commit suicide or to join a gang of housebreakers if she did not help him at once.

Lewes sat with his head bowed upon his hands, his emaciated fingers straying among the lank hair which was thinning day by day. His face was furrowed as with years of sickness, his glance lusterless, his gait uncertain. Owen had been greatly distressed to note these changes in his excellent friend, and often discussed his failing health with their employer. But Lewes was always the same faultless man of business, true to his duty and clear-headed, foreseeing and improving every opportunity of increasing Vaughan's

wealth. But the thoughts which racked the head clerk's brain were only the bitterer for this. What was the use of so much opulence? Edleen was pining to her grave; he had seen that the last time he was with her. He had attempted to beg Vaughan to make some provision for Tom, but on this point Vaughan was inexorable; he could not even bear to hear Tom's name or his utter destitution mentioned. On such occasions his eyes would glitter like steel, his voice would grow harsh and incisive, and all his love for Edleen was powerless to soften him, but rather increased his hatred against the author of her sufferings. She was obliged to beg money of him now and then in order to hide the fact of her secret resources, which Tom's continued extravagance might otherwise have led him to suspect. Edleen was so agitated every time she had to beg for her prodigal son, that she was obliged to keep her bed before and after the ordeal; for Vaughan could no longer restrain himself, even in Edleen's presence, whenever the unwelcome topic was resumed.

Lewes had witnessed one of these scenes; it had been a torture to him, and he felt as if he dared not place that lovely woman in so distressful a situation again. He sat there all night, only walking up and down now and then with noiseless steps, afraid of waking any one in the house, and then dropping into his chair again. "Truly, I love that woman better than my own self—better than my honor even! I mean to do what will make a criminal of me, and I know what it is that I do. I do it in cold blood, for I am perfectly cool; my heart does not even beat faster. Perhaps the Lord will forgive me in his mercy, on account of my great, great love."

The plan he had formed horrified him. He shuddered to think he should have been capable of conceiving such an

idea. Again his transparent hands pushed the thin hair from his temples ; a pale flush suffused his wrinkled brow and the white marks his convulsive fingers had left upon it.

"I am a lost man, a lost man ! I am no better than— And if I do that, how long will it remain concealed ? How long ? Oh, if the discovery is only delayed so long as she lives, it will be all the same what becomes of me afterward. She shall have money, poor woman ! I will procure her money, that she can die in peace. Why is *he* so blind ? What harm would it do him to sacrifice a hundredth, a thirtieth, a tenth part of his fortune to secure her peace ? But no ! There he stands, great, strong, irreproachable, feared, with his extensive schemes. What good will they do him when he kneels before her coffin ? And a poor man like me goes to perdition for her sake ! Which of us loves her better, he or I ? Which ? If I do this, *I* love her better. Ay, my haughty master, your love is inferior to that of the servant whom you will despise, dismiss, and prosecute without pity, without remorse, without giving a thought to the motive of his actions. And all my long, honest, faultless career will be dust and ashes like the stones he thinks real to-day and that are but so much rubbish. Hitherto I only changed stones ; now it is my own turn to change ; now I shall be worthless myself. They will still think me real for a little while, but then they will cast me out like a bad shard, and crush me underfoot to prove that I had never been real. And yet I was true and honest as few men are, skillful too, and now my very skill must suggest a disgusting expedient to me. What has that woman made of me with her eyes ? Ah, but when I have become a criminal through her fault, *then* I will tell her at last. 'For you ! To serve you ! Out of *love* for you !' Fool, fool, that I am ! She will listen to me with a look of pity,

and say: 'Well then, love my poor child, too!' That is all she will say with her gentle voice. I know her. Don't I know her?" He laughed out loud.

"She will say: 'I am dying; do not forsake my child!'" And then I can answer: 'I will join his gang!' That is the answer I can make her. No, she shall not know how I find her the money. She shall never know, or else she will end with despising me for what she herself has driven me to. Besides, what does it matter? I shall go to the devil, and there's an end of it. The firm will not be any the worse for it. I take so little. So small a loss is of no consequence; it will be a long time before they notice it at all. And when the discovery is made, she will be in her grave and my life will be of no importance to any one. Owen, old friend, how it will grieve you! how you will blame and despise me! But you have not loved this woman; you do not know what it is to love Edleen Vaughan, Owen, old Owen! Such love is a strength and a weakness of which you have no idea!"

He took up his pen to write a business letter. Great drops of perspiration stood on his forehead; he tore what he had written in little pieces, and burnt them with nervous care.

"Strange! I cannot manage it. There must be some formula by which one sells one's soul to the devil, and which silences one's conscience."

He walked to and fro a while; then he sat down again and wrote another similar letter, but to a different address. He destroyed it as carefully as the first, but with less agitation.

On his third attempt he seemed to have grown accustomed to the sight of his own handwriting. He read the letter over and over again—read it during a whole hour, short as

it was. Once he seized the sheet as if he would tear it up again ; but then his eyes fell on Edleen's despairing lines, and he refrained. He folded the letter, unfolded and perused it once more, but finally slipped it into an envelop and wrote the address. And now the letter lay before him, looking exactly like the other letters which littered his desk. But Lewes did not look as he had looked on the previous day ; the dim dawn stole through the London fog and showed him aged, and white, and weary, like a specter, like his own ghost risen from the grave.

CHAPTER XVIII.

FROM THE ABYSS.

THE same dawn shone rosy upon the river-bank, throwing its bright reflections far into the shady cavern, where Kathleen lay on the sand like a broken, torn, and trampled flower, from which all life and fragrance have passed, of which none will know henceforward how fair and proud a flower it has been. Her long lashes cast dark shadows on her livid cheeks ; her lips quivered from time to time as a dry leaf moves in the summer air ; her arms lay nervelessly extended, her hands lightly clasping each other ; her disheveled black hair was gray with dust ; her breathing so low as though she were dying.

Tom had walked off whistling, spurning her with his foot and calling her "murderess" close to her ear. But she had not moved a muscle or breathed a sound as he stalked away through the magnificent morning landscape to refresh himself with a bath and a few hours of sound sleep before he entered his mother's presence, tender, gentle, smoothing her cushions, covering up her feet, giving her food with a

little spoon to spare her weak hands the exertion of moving. Once she inquired after Kathleen. "Oh," said Tom gayly, "Kathleen is madly in love with me. She doesn't think of anything else, poor little thing. A pity I can't marry her." And then they turned to other topics.

Kathleen lay as still as a corpse, while hour after hour went by. Once she tried to raise herself on her arm, but she fell back upon her dusty couch again, and moved her parched, thirsty lips. It was a wonder she did not die, at least it seemed so to her; and what could she do but die? Why had Tom not killed her? He had come near doing so as it was, and she would willingly have accepted death at his hands. At last, toward evening, she raised herself by a desperate effort and left the cavern with tottering steps. Unconscious of what she did, she walked into the river, but, like many mountain streams, it was not particularly deep, and flowed limpidly over its bed of bright pebbles. She tried to lie down in it, but did not possess sufficient strength of purpose to hold her head under the water, and so emerged from it again, dripping wet. She was obliged to sit down on the bank and wind out her hair and clothes before she could drag herself farther in her utter exhaustion. Then she crept along the rocks, through the loneliest ravines, toward the green, copperish lake that would soon receive and comfort her forever.

It looked a beautiful and inviting goal when, with failing strength, she reached it at last. She thought she would glide in quite slowly and quietly. She dropped down upon the margin and dipped her bare, sore little feet in the beautiful green water, looking listlessly at them, without thinking. She was not conscious of any further thoughts, only of a dim feeling that the water was cool—cool and pleasant. She slipped further down till it reached her waist. She put

her arm round the stump of a tree and slid still lower. Her limbs grew cooler and cooler. Now her heart also felt cool—cool—cool—and then all was over.

The moon rose above the hills once more to see what people were about in the valley of tears down below, and shone upon the green lake, and shone upon a most beautiful group beside it. Llewellyn, with his silvery beard, was seated near the margin, holding a young girl on his knees, who appeared to be dead ; for she was as white as a corpse and no breath stirred on her lips. And yet the philanthropist seemed to believe in the possibility of restoring her to life ; for he was chafing her limbs, pouring some drops from his flask between her set teeth, trying to stimulate the action of her lungs, and watching her beautiful breast in the moonlight, not with the admiration of an artist, but with the eager intentness of a physician, until at last a slight movement made him smile and feel for the renewed pulsation which caused the veins at her throat to throb. Slowly the black lashes were raised, and Kathleen fixed a stony, absent look upon the face that was kindly bending over and smiling at her.

“My poor child,” said Llewellyn presently.

This first word from a human lip broke the charm, and Kathleen almost screamed :

“What, I am still alive ?” She flung her arms across her face. “But I will not, I dare not live !”

Llewellyn watched her quietly, and when he saw her try to veil her bosom—that first instinctive gesture which marks, with every female being, from three to eighty years of age, the return of life and consciousness—he began to speak to her softly, like the murmuring of a brook, or the distant rustling of leaves. He told her that life was too precious to be thrown away like this, even though it seemed unbearable for a time. He persuaded her to drink a little from

his flask, and when she finally burst into a flood of tears, he suffered her to weep herself calm, and gently smoothed her damp hair. Presently she turned to him and told him all. The old man listened in deep emotion, and wrapped the mantle he had thrown about her benumbed limbs, more tightly round her, with all a parent's tenderness.

She told him all and everything, and when she saw at last that he did not spurn her from him in horror, she accepted a morsel of bread from him. The morning was breaking when Kathleen fell asleep from sheer exhaustion. Llewellyn sat silently by her, considering where he should take her in her present state.

The nearest human habitation in these parts was Martyn's house. If he could take her so far, she was sure of aid in case of her probable sickness. He saw the surrounding hills steep themselves in ruddy light, the autumnal trees, still rich with golden foliage, take a warmer hue, while the lake and its borders below still lay veiled in deep blue shadows. It was so lovely a daybreak that the aged minstrel could not resist its charm. He had never been capable of prolonged sadness, and now he could not help smiling at sight of all the splendor given to his view. For several minutes he did not perceive that Kathleen's gloomy eyes were fixed upon him with the bitter question in them: "How can he smile while I am dying with misery?" Then he became aware of her waking, and asked her kindly whether she felt strong enough to rise. She stood up immediately.

"Oh, yes," she replied, gruffly and shortly. "I can walk now. Good-by."

"Nay, my child, we shall go together."

"Where?" Her shrinking glance sought the ground.

"I know the right place to take sick people. Later on,

when we are sure of your health, we will take you home."

"Me? Where will you take me now? Not to the vicarage? I have no business there."

"No, certainly not to the vicarage. Trust yourself to my guidance, my child. We will first seek a human habitation, where you can change your clothes, and then smooth your way so as to enable you to tread it."

"I know but one person to go to—Ulla, the witch."

"Who?"

"Ulla, the witch."

"Is Ulla still alive?"

"Oh, yes. And she is just such another outcast as I am. That's the right place for me; the cavern of the witch who poisons and deludes human hearts to revenge herself on mankind. Yes, I will go to her."

"So she is alive?"

"Yes. Why does that surprise you so? Do you know anything about her?"

"Oh, yes, being so old as I am. I have seen much and know many. But you must not go to her; you must return to your duty."

"My duty?"

"What is Edleen to do without you?"

"To die, as she is sure to do anyhow."

"She will not die quickly, nor yet easily."

"And I am to enter that house?"

"I shall prepare it for your reception."

"Sooner than go there I will go into the wide world."

"Indeed! As what?"

"As nothing at all."

"We shall soon reach a house now; let me wrap my cloak more closely around you, so as to hide your feet."

Slowly and painfully the two passed on through the lovely autumn morning. Kathleen's eyes were fixed upon the dust at her feet ; her white face seemed hardened with despair. She looked like a Medusa with her tangled, black hair, and never spoke a word. Saving a suicide is always an ungrateful enterprise ; for it is a difficult task to reconcile him to life afterward, while he is sick with shame and vexed at having lost his chance of dying. All this the sage, who knew human hearts so well, told himself as he walked on in profound silence. Suddenly, at a turn in the road, a sweet, soft singing reached their ears, and they saw the valley with the ruins of Temorah's cottage before them ; Temorah herself was pacing the meadow, rocking a white pillow in her arms and singing.

Kathleen stood rooted to the ground.

"Take me away," she whispered, "take me away from here."

"Come, my child, pass on ; the poor dead woman over there will not know us."

"I cannot go past that place."

Llewellyn sighed wearily and turned into a rather long by-way. He thought Kathleen walked very slowly, and the girl fancied *he* must be tired, until at last they reached the beautiful valley in which Martyn's dwelling stood.

"You do not mean to take me in here ?" said Kathleen, knitting her brows.

"Yes, I do, my child. Where can you be better than with an excellent friend and a clever physician ? He will help us."

"Help us ! That's what people call helping !"

"Ah, yes, human aid is always imperfect and cruel."

Llewellyn knocked. The doctor's good-natured old cook came to the door and clasped her hands in dismayed surprise at Kathleen's appearance.

"Please, good woman, let us have a warm bed and hot tea without loss of time. We fell from the rocks into the lake, and it is quite a miracle that we are still alive. And we have not taken any food either since the day before yesterday."

The good old woman kept her thoughts to herself and asked no questions (a habit she had acquired from her master), but did as she was bidden. Meanwhile Llewellyn sat down by Martyn's bed and told him the whole story, asking him what ought to be done.

"I'll think about it," said Martyn, hurriedly dressing himself.

Then he went in to Kathleen, who was lying among the white pillows in a clean, white night-dress of the old cook's, her black lashes and hair contrasting forcibly with her livid pallor, her blue lips and nails showing the beginning effect of the cold water upon her, which would probably bring on a violent fever. When she recognized the doctor, she turned her face to the wall and lifted her pale hand, as if to motion him from the room; but the poor limp hand fell wearily on the white linen again, and Martyn took it gently in his as he sat down by the bedside and said with his pleasant voice :

"When death has closed his door against one, one must try and make friends again with life."

No answer.

"And when one has done wrong and harbored evil thoughts, one must sometimes travel a long and weary way before one can obtain pardon from one's self."

"I have more than atoned for all," muttered Kathleen between her teeth.

"Yes, you are very unfortunate; but that is no reason

why you should not live. There are many unhappy people who go on living."

"Oh, of course. And I can go begging. One can always do that; for a girl without a character is not likely to get a situation with children or invalids. But then, I can sing a little; I'll turn street-singer; that's also a way of living."

"Do you imagine we should be so careless of you? Don't you think we all feel it our duty to try and make up to you for the wrong you have suffered?"

"Oh!" murmured Kathleen, with an expression of such deep disgust, such infinite weariness, such hopeless despair that it cut Martyn to the soul. He had never liked her, thinking her frivolous, and greatly disapproving of her flirting with Tom and Morgan at the same time, but now he saw her so miserable he forgot his dislike.

By and by Kathleen's teeth began to chatter with a violent fit of ague, but she did not grow delirious. She lay perfectly silent for fear of betraying herself. Only there was a continual feeling upon her of falling from a rock and wading up to her shoulders in deep, black water, of being pulled out by her hair, and then falling back and wading on again. She grew to be especially afraid of being pulled out, for that made her head ache terribly every time, just as if they were pulling out her brain.

It was a trying night, and her friends did not quit her couch, not wishing to trust her with strangers in case she should grow delirious. When morning came, she suddenly sat up in her bed.

"Hark!" she said. "Hark! there he is! there he is! Don't let him in! Oh, don't let him in! There he is again. Ah, me! ah, me! take me away!"

A few moments later they heard a step on the gravel walk. Martyn looked out ; it really was Tom. Martyn went and stood before his door.

"What do you want here?"

"Why, to see you, of course."

"I am not at home for you ; I shall never be at home for you again, do you hear ? All I have to say to you is, that you had better start for London immediately and not show yourself about this country for some months, at the very least."

"Must it be London ? I can go and stay with my friend Llewellyn."

"Llewellyn's door is shut against you ; he would not take you in. Go to London and stay there. We don't want you here."

"But what has occurred to produce this change?"

"Need I tell you what has occurred ? Go, we know you no longer. Go where people are ignorant of your character, or where you can associate with scoundrels of your own stamp."

Martyn slammed the door behind him, and returned to Kathleen, whom Llewellyn had not left. She had listened with dilated eyes. Now she heaved a deep sigh, lay back among her pillows, and sank into a deep, peaceful sleep.

"Oh," whispered Martyn, "that is well. She'll be all right to-morrow."

Kathleen passed most of that day in deep, almost torpid slumber ; in the following night she grew feverish again ; but when day broke once more, her eyes were clear and she could even take a little food.

The old cook told her that Mrs. Vaughan had sent to inquire after her several times, and seemed to want her badly. She was not at all well, and nobody could nurse

her or do anything to her taste ; she wished to know when the young lady would come.

Kathleen listened in silence. So this was the path marked out for her ? This was where her duty lay ? The duty of gratitude ? Oh, no, no, no ! She had richly paid all she had ever been indebted for. But still there was one being in the world that wanted her. Strange ! She lay thinking about it all, and when Martyn came in she acquainted him with her resolution to get up and return to her cousin's house. He patted her hand as one would a child's, silently encouraging it to do right. They had sent her clothes, he said. Kathleen had but one scruple left, which it was not easy to speak about.

" Must I not——" she asked hesitatingly, " must not the master of the house be told ? "

" No, there is no need. I have told him that you fell ill with despair, because Temorah's cottage had been burnt through your carelessness."

" He feels convinced that I set it on fire intentionally."

" Not now. Besides, he is in such distress himself that he hardly thinks about others at present, and sadly longs for help ; he does not know how to treat his wife, and she cannot bear his presence. She is very sick."

" Will she die soon ? "

" Perhaps not, if we tend her like a flower."

In the afternoon Kathleen sat by the chimney, Llewellyn talking indefatigably beside her ; sometimes she even listened to him, though it was hardly his purpose that she should do so.

When she rose to withdraw, she said : " It is customary to thank the preserver of one's life, is it not ? "

" That is as it may be," replied Martyn. " Not always."

" Indeed ? Then I need not do so ? "

"No, certainly not," said Llewellyn. "But perhaps you will forgive me when I tell you that I really hesitated before I tried to restore you."

"I thank you for that," she returned, giving him her hand.

On the following day Llewellyn and Martyn took her home in Vaughan's carriage, after having made sure of Tom's departure for London. Edleen was greatly changed; she folded Kathleen in her arms with such overflowing tenderness that the poor child could not think herself quite useless, at least. But when she entered her old room, her heart grew so heavy that she begged to have another assigned her, under the pretext of wishing to be nearer Edleen. The latter evidently had her private misgivings, for she watched Kathleen with anxious eyes, would not let her quit her side for an instant, and showed herself humbly grateful for every little service. Vaughan's brow was furrowed; every new day seemed to mark it with deeper lines. Tom had set the miners against him; small disturbances had to be put down with some severity, and Edleen laid tied to her couch of pain and could not mitigate the men's harsh proceedings with her feminine gentleness. Owen had come. But she avoided meeting him as much as possible. She was afraid of his recurring to her broken promise. How far she had glided down since then—how near the abyss seemed!

The November fogs brought trying days to Gwynne, causing him to be more frequently seized with asthmatic attacks, but he bore them patiently, and as his kindly nature could not endure to see any one low-spirited near him, he always talked with animation, and took a lively interest in whatever was going on.

And yet, one day, Martyn found him depressed in spite of himself.

"What am I to do with Morgan? You have remained a dear son to me, Martyn, so I can confide my troubles to you. He is pining after Kathleen, and she is not what I should wish his wife to be."

"No, certainly not," said Martyn emphatically. "I am really of opinion that one should cure him at a single blow of this folly, which is uselessly poisoning his life."

"At a single blow?"

"I have it in my power to strike that blow, but—I fear the consequences."

"Morgan has a stout heart."

Martyn related Kathleen's story simply and truthfully.

"Ah, well," said Gwynne at last, "that is certainly decisive; but it is very, very hard. Poor boy."

"At all events we need not be in too great a hurry."

"I should like to feel a little stronger myself."

While this conversation was being held, Gladys was sitting in the fog by Una's grave, on a little bench her brother had made her. She loved the quiet, seclusive denseness of an autumn fog, and the low, rippling sound among the dry leaves. A few late roses were blooming on Una's grave, and the fog had strewn them with tiny, diamond-like drops. Gladys had grown exquisitely beautiful of late. Her quiet sadness, her black dress, the meekness with which she bore her blighted love, and her anxiety for her father, combined to lend her dreamy eyes, with that fair crown of golden plaits above them and her tall graceful figure, a peculiar and touching charm. Missy thought constantly of Una's dying words; but she saw no sign of that dear wish being fulfilled. Gladys remained cold and haughty; Martyn was invariably grave and reserved in her presence, and if ever she gave him her hand he dropped it immediately. She could not avoid hearing him praised everywhere, especially

with the poor ; she often met him, too, when she went on errands of charity to the poorest huts. On such occasions, he would hastily withdraw if he could ; but several times they had both been obliged to stay to soothe the last moments of some sufferer, and once, over the deathbed of a young consumptive girl, their eyes had met and filled with tears. And yet, next day, the ice had been frozen harder than ever between them.

Gladys was soon as dewy with the fog as the roses, and sat dreaming in the deep stillness, when she became aware of some one singing close by.

It was a woman's voice she heard, so soft and deep and touching that the young girl, sitting by her sister's grave, did not attempt to restrain her tears.

“ My baby shivers, oh, mother,
With the chill and sleety air !
The trees have leaves to clothe them,
But my baby has nothing to wear,
Nothing to shield it, mother,
From the chill and sleety air ! ”

“ Where is thy husband, oh, daughter,
Thy baby's father, say ?
Does he refuse thee shelter,
And leave thee thus to stray ?
I am dead and cannot help thee—
Where is thy husband, say ? ”

“ My baby wails, oh, mother,
We two are a woful sight,
We're alone in the world and forsaken,
With no bed but thy grave at night ;
No bed but thy grave, oh, mother,
And we two are a woful sight.”

“ I'm so poor in my grave, oh, daughter !
I have naught but a winding-sheet,

And that I will give thee gladly,
To cover thy baby sweet ;
To shield thy baby, daughter,
From chilly air and sleet."

Gladys felt attracted by that plaintive singing ; deep mourning always seems to give one a feeling of affinity to the sorrowful, and a right to sympathize with them. Rising softly and guiding herself by the sounds that still floated on the air, she found Temorah at her mother's grave, moving the dead leaves upon it as if she were washing them one by one, and singing, as Gladys had heard her, brokenly, incoherently, now one strophe of her lay, and now another. Gladys watched her a long time, with an overflowing heart. She had often tried to speak to Temorah, fancying she must obtain some reasonable word from her lips, but in vain. To-day the poor mad woman nodded pleasantly at her and said :

"It isn't cold, not a bit, for Kathleen has burnt it. She lit the matches, you know, and they flared up and set the bed on fire, and Kathleen ran off saying: 'Tom's child! Fie, Tom's child! How like it is to Tom, and it is not mine, but Temorah's.' And so she ran off. 'Fie, Tom's child!' She would not have it, would Kathleen. She would not have it, no, she would not. She was not like Temorah. Temorah would have the child, her own baby child, but not Tom; no, she would not have Tom. Tom said—what did he say?" She laid her finger on her lips and smiled archly. "Tom said—'Money! more money! And I shall hide with you!' And there he was eating, eating, eating—taking my bread and milk. I was faint with hunger and weary with work, but he ate, ate, ate. He ate a great deal, and then he said: 'Kathleen is more beautiful than you, after all!' And I was hungry, but he ate what he pleased."

Gladys clung to the nearest cross to save herself from falling, for the ground seemed to shake under her feet.

“To shield thy baby, daughter,
From chilly air and sleet——”

sang Temorah. “They were little flames,” she went on; “I saw Kathleen and the little flames, you know; and then there was a blaze—a great big blaze. Kathleen ran away from the flames lest they should seize her. She wanted to see Tom. Ay, ay, Kathleen and Tom. And when she cut his name in the cross—his name, she cut it in here, you know—why, where’s the cross? The cross is gone! My cross is gone! Have you carried it away? Tom’s name was carved on it, and now it is gone——

“I gave thee all my having,
A tender winding sheet——

“And now she herself hasn’t even got a cross!” Temorah wept. “Don’t you know where the cross is? I’m so tired, else I would find it; for it wasn’t in the blaze. But Kathleen had it—that cross. She cut *Tom* into it. It grieved my poor mother sadly, and she cursed Tom; ay, ay, her curse is on him.

“Where is thy husband, oh, daughter,
Thy baby’s father, say?
In jail with other felons,
Condemned till judgment-day!

“And if I don’t wash I shall have no money to buy milk with, and my child will be hungry, for Tom has drunk all there was, and Kathleen has burnt my goat, the goat my kind father the minstrel gave me, and there’s nothing left for the little one. So I must wash.

"Where is thy baby's father?
He's leading a life of glee,
Laughing, and drinking, and singing,
And making love to others,
As he used to make love to me.

"And the girl who believes him is lost, lost, lost. Where is my cross? I am so tired, for I carried it. Don't you know where it is? Kathleen doesn't know it either; Kathleen cut *Tom* in it, and then my mother cursed her. Don't you know where it is?

"Does he refuse thee shelter,
And leave thee thus to stray?
I am dead and cannot help thee,
I have naught but a winding sheet.

"Don't you know where it is? I am so tired. But I want it here. My poor mother has nothing whatever. And if I lie down to sleep here, she says: 'My cross, where is my cross?' And I don't remember where it is, and cannot find it. But you—you will find it? Are you Kathleen? Then you'll find it, for you know where you lay hidden that day."

Tremblingly, speechless with dismay, Gladys suffered Temorah to draw her away with her; but as they reached the hidden spot below the bridge, and the mad woman began to remove the dry leaves, she grew so frightened that she was on the point of flying, when a real cross met her view.

Temorah laughed. "Turn it round, turn it round, Kathleen," she said. "You see the place where you carved his name on it. You cannot have forgotten."

With a great effort she turned the cross and displayed the fatal name. So all was true, then? Gladys dropped

down among the leaves for a moment, she felt too giddy to stand. She stared at the name on the cross, and thought of Martyn, and felt as if she must fall on her knees before him. Her fancy pictured him as an angel with fiery sword and wrathful glance, but a good angel! for he had evidently saved her from falling into a horrible abyss.

"Do you want to burn it?" asked Temorah, and her eyes began to sparkle so dangerously that Gladys started up and ran away as fast as her feet would carry her.

Temorah took the cross upon her shoulders and carried it back to her mother's grave; there she flung it down without looking round, and walked away to a neighboring brook to wash leaves.

"I am dead, and poor, and buried,
What *can* I give to thee?"

she still went on murmuring to herself.

CHAPTER XIX.

TILLED WITH THE SUBSOIL PLOW.

"MARTYN," said Gwynne one morning, "Martyn, when the Lord bade Abraham offer his son to him, he guided the fatal knife to work the child's salvation and not his death, did not he?"

"He did, indeed," replied the doctor, glancing anxiously at the heavily throbbing veins at Gwynne's throat. "That is what we surgeons must tell ourselves every hour of our lives. God guides the knife! Else we should never dare to raise it."

Morgan could not see the prayer which trembled on his father's lips when he obeyed a summons to the study, but he had a strange, uneasy presentiment that his fate was about to be decided.

"My son," began the vicar, "I fear your struggles are leading to no result."

"I am afraid I cannot fulfill your favorite wish, father ; I cannot enter the church."

"It seems to me that your soul is too much taken up with worldly matters to let you rise above your own weakness."

"Perhaps it is, father."

"Have you never considered that this world is probably nothing but empty show, and slips from our hands like sand or dew ?"

"I live in it and exist of it, father."

"But only temporarily, as you pass on to another world."

"Who can tell ?"

"I can, as positively as if I saw its gates open and heard its inmates sing. Else I should not have the strength to tell you to-day what you must be told."

"I, father ?"

"And if you do not turn your heart to Heaven, you will not be able to bear it."

"What do you mean ?"

"Some days ago Kathleen was drawn from the Green Lake, where she had tried to drown herself."

Morgan grasped the back of a chair ; the room whirled before his eyes.

"It was because Tom wanted to avenge Temorah, whose house and child—her and Tom's child—had been burnt through Kathleen's want of precaution. And so he did to Kathleen what sent her into the Green Lake——"

"On that morning when I——" whispered Morgan. Then he reeled like a young pine in a storm, and fell with a dull groan at his full length upon the floor. Gwynne passed his hand across his forehead and knelt down by his son, endeavoring to restore him to consciousness. He had plenty

of cordials at hand, and used them unsparingly, but it was long before Morgan opened his eyes. Then the young man hastily raised himself.

"Nay, father. You are not kneeling? It will hurt you. Please sit down in your chair, and forgive me for behaving like a girl. But, father, it will break my heart!"

He flung himself upon the ground once more, bowing his head on his arms and sobbing till he shook like a tree under the strokes of the ax.

Gwynne sighed heavily. He had been fain to sink into his chair, because his heart began to palpitate violently, and he might not grow weak at this moment.

At last Morgan started up and paced the room with quick steps, as if trying to subdue some great physical pain.

"I can hear you now, father," he said; "tell me everything."

And Gwynne told, as only *he* could tell such a tale, gently, kindly, leniently, and full of pity, gazing steadfastly the while at his son, who was walking to and fro softly and rapidly, like a fully conscious man stoically enduring a lengthy operation. He could not speak, but he bore his pain manfully. Now and again he leaned his arms and brow against the window-panes and gazed out at the falling leaves; and then he resumed his restless walk once more.

"I loved her," he said at length.

"Ay, my son, and you must not regret that; love makes one good, and forgiveness still better."

"I cannot forgive her for having deceived me."

"Perhaps she did not know herself what she wanted."

"She knew that I loved her better than my own soul and my salvation."

"That is why she was taken from you."

"But in such a way, father! How cruel, how cruel!" He again pressed his brow against the window-pane.

Gwynne was silent for some time from sheer exhaustion; he drank a little water and tried to breathe more quietly. It was a hard hour for father and son, both feeling as if they could not survive it. Now and then they spoke to each other but with ever longer pauses between.

"Oh, father, father," moaned the young man. "Cannot you kill me outright?"

"We must learn to live on in spite of mortal heart-wounds."

"Ah, me!"

"I should have preferred death, my child, to the necessity of hurting you like this."

Morgan came and flung himself on his knees before his father, grasping his emaciated hands and pressing them over his eyes.

"Father, I suffer!"

"Ay, my child, I grieve for you. Could I have spared you this by any sufferings of my own, I should have set my fainting strength to endure them."

"But you are strong, father!"

"I am dying, Morgan. They who called Una are calling me, and Una smiles and beckons. I see her smile and beckon by night and by day."

Morgan sprang to his feet and dashed his rising tears away. What had Una's death been in comparison to the tortures of this hour? And yet it was killing his father. And he—he was alive; the blow that crushed his heart did not slay him.

"I think I should like to get out into the air, father. I am choking."

"Ay, my son, go. But remember that you cannot de-

stroy Tom without killing his mother. 'Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord;' and you will be so terribly avenged as time goes on that you will feel sorry yourself."

"No, father, I do not mean to call that scoundrel to account. I only want a breath of fresh air."

"And solitude, my child?"

"Yes, father. I must spend my passion, you see. I shall be calm afterward."

The young man laid his cheek against his father's brow, and walked quickly away into the pathless depths of the forest, through ravines and across rocks, tossing himself to and fro on the mossy ground like a wounded deer that tries to shake the mortal shaft from its flank and seeks some solitary spot to hide its agony in. He wept, as one weeps in youth, scalding tears that leave life-long marks behind them. He felt as if he could not survive the torture of his thoughts, picturing scene after scene to himself, dissecting his own pain, groaning aloud, and digging his hands into the damp, black forest soil, as if that would cool and assuage his hot distress. Then he fancied he held Tom in his grasp, strangling him, setting his foot upon his face, spitting at him; and again, he thanked Heaven that he had but done this in fancy and not in fact, having merely torn up and trampled the moss, which smelt sweetly and knew not why he wasted it.

The night had closed in when Morgan returned. He felt as if he were coming out of a hot furnace, as if he were wholly different from what he had been in the morning, as if people would not know him again. Up to this day he had believed his soul to have passed through a sea of troubles, but now he saw that that had only been a preparation for the inhuman misery which was destined to make a man of him. However, he had grown perfectly calm, as he

had promised to do. He sat down to the tea-table, with haggard eyes, indeed, but returning his father's anxious look with a smile. His mother softly laid her hand on his shoulder and asked him some trifling question. Ah, how aged and grief-worn she looked ! How was it that he had not noticed that before ? And Gladys ! Gladys looked as if she had seen a specter and were slow in getting the better of her fright. Gladys was greatly changed, too, and he had not perceived it. Martyn had come, Gwynne having felt very ill toward nightfall ; he seemed very grave, and Gladys sat looking at him. Really, they were all changed. When had Gladys ever looked at Martyn ! Had he, Morgan, been away for twenty years, like Rip Van Winkle ? He began to doubt his senses, everything seemed so strange.

Martyn felt like a criminal whenever his look fell upon Morgan's white face and weary eyes, and yet, how could he have acted otherwise ? This set him thinking of Gladys and his interference with her first innocent romance. He glanced involuntarily across at her, to find her large eyes fixed full and steadily upon himself. As their glances met, she blushed deeply and looked down. Now it was Martyn's turn to wonder. Gladys looking at him : Gladys blushing before him like a rose. How beautiful she was at this moment, and how much Martyn would have given to see her eyes once more ! Well, he had that good fortune later in the evening, when she thought herself unobserved while Winnie was playing the harp and singing her adopted father to rest. The vicar delighted to hear the child sing, and he knew she was fond of improvising, though she would not own that she did so. She liked to stand in the farthest, darkest corner of the room, away from the lamplight, and thence her sweet voice rose on the air like a bird's, full and clear. Morgan had turned his back to the

lamp and felt the shade a relief. Little Minnie came and nestled against him ; the child always knew by instinct when any one was sad, and felt her loving little heart ache for the sufferer. Morgan put his arm about her, and touched her soft curls with his lips. At that moment Gladys again raised her eyes to Martyn's face, and this time it was he who reddened.

"If I only dared to beg his pardon," thought Gladys. "I shall do it some day, I know I shall."

"She wants to ask me something," mused Martyn, "but what?"

Winnie's singing sounded like a message of peace to all these throbbing, trembling, and doubting hearts.

Two children sit by the river,
And see the water flow ;
They know not if their watching
Will be of use or no.

Their mother, people tell them,
Has sought a brighter clime ;
But, if they are good and patient,
They'll see her again sometime.

"And so we wait with patience
We sit here every day.
As the river travels farthest,
Perhaps she will come this way."

The tide reflects a cloudlet ;
"Is that her veil?" they cry—
And weep to see it wander
Away into the sky.

They mark a water rose leaf
Afloat among the foam :
"It left the golden city,
To waft our mother home !"

And when the leaf has vanished,
They see two wings flit by ;
“ Are those our mother’s pinions,
That wing her from the sky ?—

“ Oh, no, it was but a robin
That fluttered gayly here,
And mirrored its wings in the current
But not our mother dear.”

And now the moon has risen,
And o’er the river stands.
The children greet it gladly,
And clap their little hands.

“ Art thou the steed that bears her,
All trapped with silver, say ?
And do the stars go with thee,
As squires, to show the way ? ”

The moon rides by in silence.
“ She yet will come we know ! ”
Oh, children, you must seek her
Where *other* rivers flow !

Oh, children, you must follow
Those rivers to the *main* !
And when your journey is over,
You’ll see her face again.

Winnie’s voice died gently away, as if lost in the distance, while she struck a few more chords on the harp. “ My harp is out of tune,” she said, “ and nobody can tune it so well as Llewellyn—and my mother,” she added softly, as though she were afraid of being unjust.

“ Where did Winnie get that song ? ” asked Morgan.

“ In here,” replied Minnie, pointing to her forehead.

“ You don’t mean to say she has invented it ? ”

“ Yes, I do. She also invents very pretty stories, and relates them to us.”

Martyn looked at his watch. "Time for children and invalids to go to bed," he said.

"Well," said Morgan, "please to count me among the children or the invalids ; I'm very tired."

Gwynne, who had called the little minstrel to his side to kiss her and speak to her about her lay, overheard the last words.

"Yes," he said: "We will go to rest. Let us pray."

His prayer was meant for Morgan that evening. When it was done, the young man approached and grasped his father's hand, bent his brow to receive his mother's kiss, uttered a brief "Good-night, all of you," and vanished. When his brothers came upstairs, he had already sunk into a deep sleep from which he did not awake all night.

On the following morning Gladys and Morgan walked out to the woods together. "I should like to tell you something I cannot tell anybody else, and which I want you to explain to me, Morgan," Gladys had said ; and the handsome sister and brother had wandered away together, to hear from each other what was to cure their two young hearts.

On the same morning Lewes was standing in Mrs. Vaughan's drawing-room, waiting for her to come down to him. His face was ashy pale—he saw that in the pier-glass. The door opened and Kathleen came in. Lewes started as he recognized her. She looked as if she had risen from a bed of deadly sickness ; her dim eyes had deep black rims around them ; her face was thin and white ; her lips quivered nervously. She and Lewes looked at each other like two doomed souls meeting in purgatory.

"My cousin feels exceedingly unwell to-day," began Kathleen. Her voice was also changed, sounding hoarse and broken. Lewes looked at her in growing amazement.

He saw that her figure was bent, that she moved wearily and without elasticity. Now and then a deep line appeared between her brows, making her look still more like a Medusa, although her hair was smoothly combed back and fastened in a knot at her neck. She seemed to have forgotten his presence, for she stood gazing absently out of the window, bending her heavy, lusterless eyes upon the sea, where the waves were foaming and chasing each other, a mass of cold, white lines, streaking the monotonous grayness of sky and ocean.

"The weather is very unfavorable too," he said, after so long a pause that Kathleen had already forgotten her own words, and slowly turned her face toward him.

"I beg your pardon?" she asked huskily.

"The weather is not favorable to invalids," he repeated, scrutinizing the young girl; for the moment her appearance made him oblivious of his own trouble.

"Do you think it makes a difference? She is not consumptive."

How cold and harsh that sounded. What had become of Kathleen's soft modulation and supple movements?

"God forbid she should be consumptive!"

"Really? Consumption would be nothing in comparison to the agony she endures."

"But can't one help her, consult physicians, procure her change of air and scene? She ought not to be left in such a state."

Again her eyes drifted toward him and seemed to *look* at him, too, for the first time noting his appearance.

After a long interval she said, "It would be better to poison her or to shoot her dead this moment."

Lewes compressed his lips and quickly raised his hand to his forehead. Kathleen stood before him, with the deep

furrow between her black brows, like a murderess disclosing some horrible scheme.

"She would wish to live for—for her son," said Lewes hesitatingly.

"It would have been better for him if she had died long ago." The speaker's face was hard and cold as marble.

"Nay," said Lewes, "but every sinner can turn back."

"No, that he cannot. That he cannot. He who has gone to perdition can never turn back."

She stared out at the sea, and Lewes again raised his hand to his forehead.

"What a misery!" he said.

"Of course it is a misery. Most things are."

"Nay, I think there is a strange sweetness about some things which prevents one's feeling utterly miserable through them."

"Indeed!"

"Take self-sacrifice, for instance. Self-sacrifice is very nearly akin to happiness."

"I have not found it so."

"Oh, but it is. When one loves, one is happy to sacrifice one's self, even supposing it were pernicious, foolish, or downright sinful to do so."

"And where's the good of it!"

"The good? Ah, one does not think about good or bad at all at such a moment."

"And so one does more harm than one knows of."

"Is not the will of greater consequence than the deed?"

"I don't think so. The mother fancies her son will reform if she bears with his folly, and so makes a criminal of him."

"Is not that too harsh a term?"

"No harder than truth usually is."

"Truth is cruel at times."

"Truth is like the weather to-day, cold and gray, with the leaves falling down till all is bare and ugly. Truth, truth ! If people would remember that their beloved ones are nothing but skull and skeleton under their outward shape, they'd leave off loving them."

"Do you think they would ?"

"If their imagination were vivid enough to picture the real, grinning, bony, horrible truth, they would."

"I fancy they would kiss the very ashes of those they loved."

"Hum," muttered Kathleen, between her teeth.

"Why, our love often subsists but on ashes, on a shadow, a mere nothing, and yet we build it altars and sacrifice life and property, honor and conscience, peace and happiness to it, getting nothing in return but a shadow."

"Better a shadow than the disgusting reality."

"The reality one has yearned for *must* be sweet."

"You think so ? It can be so horrible that one would *hang* one's self to shake it off and forget it."

"Ah, yes ; if one could but forget !"

"If one could forget, there would be little suffering in the world ; for present suffering is nothing compared to the after-misery it engenders. Memory is the subtlest of tortures, while actual suffering numbs and blunts the senses, making a mere brute of the sufferer."

"Not always. One can endure a good deal of racking before one grows insensible to pain."

"That depends on the nature of the racking," returned Kathleen, with a bitter sigh. Lewes gazed thoughtfully at the ground. They were so engrossed by their own troubles that they hardly followed each other's meaning, but referred every word that was spoken to their own individual experiences.

"Shall I not see our dear mistress to-day?" asked Lewes, after another long pause.

"I think not. She told me, almost irritably, too, that she was not equal to seeing you."

"Did she?" murmured Lewes, his face growing still paler, and his eyes reddening a little.

"You are sorry?"

"Yes, rather."

"Why, had you anything unpleasant to say to her!"

"No, it would be considered pleasant, I suppose. I brought her a little money."

"Oh," said Kathleen bitterly, "that certainly is the pleasantest, best, and most welcome thing one can offer any inmate of this house."

Lewes sighed and pulled out his pocket-book. His fingers trembled as he opened it. Kathleen's attention was at last arrested.

"Where did you get that money? We have neither of us any jewelry left, so far as I know."

"No; but then—well, as I had the honor of remarking to you just now, 'self-sacrifice is sweet.' I should think you must know by experience."

"Not exactly. Our experiences evidently differ."

"Thank God!" whispered Lewes; but Kathleen overheard him.

"Everybody thinks his own experience bitterest," she said, watching his trembling fingers as he counted out the money to her.

"And I am to take this?" she asked.

"Of course—take it, take it, take it!"

She hesitated. "It will be as useless as the rest!" There was something like pity in her voice.

"Of course it is useless," said Lewes, lightly and cheer-

fully. "We have known all along that there was no use in anything we did. But she is to have peace."

Kathleen fixed a strange look upon him.

"I am very sorry that my cousin cannot see you to-day. If you could come again in five or six days, she would be pleased."

"Pleased? No; but she might find my presence supportable—not quite so—so—distasteful as to-day."

"She has times now when she will not see anybody, not even her husband."

Lewes suppressed the words that rose to his lips, and Kathleen saw it.

"There are moments when I feel relieved at her having such little caprices; they almost give me hope."

"Ah, she will live! She must live!" exclaimed Lewes, pressing his thin hands to his temples.

"*You* say that, who love her?" asked Kathleen reproachfully. "*You*, who have but just declared that dust and ashes would suffice you."

"I did not say *suffice*."

"No, true; but you should have said so. It would have been wiser; much wiser."

"Who is really wise?"

"Some animals are, I believe; bees, hamsters, and the like."

"Bees and hamsters! What do we know about their feelings?"

"As much as about our fellow-men's. Don't you shudder when you think what people walk side by side, shake each other by the hand, and eat at one table?"

There was something like her former mischievousness in these last words.

"Ah, me! Poor humanity!" said Lewes.

"Poor, wicked humanity !"

"Well, yes, wicked ; but there is something good in our very wickedness, like the honey Samson found in a carcass."

"I could mention things to you in which you would find it difficult to point out the honey."

"Perhaps an unprejudiced eye—a child's—would discover it."

"Oh, children's eyes are even less lenient than ours. Children judge, and hate, and despise, most piteously."

"*You* say that ?"

"*I* do."

"I am very sorry for you."

"For me ? How queer !"

"Why ?"

"Because I'm so sorry for *you*."

"And we hardly know a reason for being so, either of us."

"Hardly."

"Nor are we in a situation to confide our troubles to each other."

"If it were any good, we might do so ; but it would be useless."

"And no great consolation."

"No consolation at all," said Kathleen energetically.

"I must go," said Lewes, looking at his watch.

Kathleen offered him her hand. "We shall meet again in the nether world," she said. "Maybe we shall make merry there together and praise the delights of self-sacrifice."

She burst into a wild laugh and vanished, while Lewes took his hat and went his way, with a drooping countenance.

Kathleen threw the bank-notes on Edleen's lap. "There's money for you," she said; "money from him."

"From whom?"

"Your lover."

"Kathleen!"

"If that man has not risked his soul to help you, I've got no eyes in my head."

CHAPTER XX.

ONCE UPON A TIME.

WINNIE was perched on a table before the chimney with a charming group around her, while the snow fell in thick flakes abroad, and the night was quickly closing in. Minnie and Daisy were huddled together on one low stool, while Lizzie stood at her brother Ned's knee, her golden locks flowing over his breast. Freddy was stretched at full length upon the ground, his chin in his hand, the firelight at play among his curls, the lively motion of his crossed feet accentuating his interest in what he heard. Missy had laid aside her work and was smoothing Gladys' hair, as that young lady sat on the floor beside her. Morgan leant on the back of his father's chair, discussing a passage in *Ecclesiastes* with him; the lamplight fell upon the open folio and shed a mild halo about the old and the youthful head bending over it.

Mrs. Gwynne lay back in an arm-chair in the darkest part of the room and tried to read Morgan's face, which showed greater resemblance to his father's every day, especially as it had grown thinner and more manly in the course of the last few weeks.

Robert, the sailor, was walking up and down, "on quarter-

deck," he said, but not losing a word of what was spoken near the hearth. The twins had made themselves comfortable on the Newfoundland dog, who raised his head from time to time to lick one of them, and beat the floor with his tail to express his satisfaction when they pushed their little hands in his mouth or under his shaggy ears; now and then he panted a little by way of hinting that he felt rather warm. Martyn had come in a few minutes before from the cold and the snow, and seated himself by Mrs. Gwynne's side, whence he could see and hear all that was going on.

"Once upon a time," said Winnie, "ever so long ago, there lived a great minstrel."

"With a harp?" asked Daisy.

"And a long beard?" added Lizzie.

"Had he any children?" said Minnie.

"Minstrels have no children," put in Freddy sententiously. "They love other people's children; that's enough for them."

"Of course he had no children," continued Winnie.

"You see!" said Freddy, nodding proudly at the company.

"But he had a beard, and harps, a great many harps, and violins, too, for he could play on anything."

"They always can in fairy tales," remarked Freddy; "things come easy to them."

"He had a splendid house, too, by the sea."

"And a pony?" asked Minnie.

"Oh, no; a big horse; he was a grown-up man, you know."

"I suppose he looked somewhat like Llewellyn?" said Ned.

"They all do," declared Freddy.

"Nothing of the kind," returned Winnie, opening her

eyes very wide. "Haven't you seen those pictures of young minstrels with stockings to their knees, short cloaks, and big feathers fastened to their caps, and carrying mandolins in their arms? Did *they* look like Llewellyn?"

"Who knows whether they knew anything worth speaking of!" said Freddy.

"They didn't live so very long ago, either—fifteenth century," said Ned.

"Of course; but I only mean mine lived when people didn't yet know how to write music, and never sang more than one note at a time."

"Do they sing two at the same time now?" asked Robert, stopping in his walk.

"I couldn't," opined Daisy.

"Stupid!" said Winnie. "I'm speaking of choruses. In those days they didn't know that one might sing A, and another C sharp, or E, or the upper A."

"Or C and F," said Freddy.

"Or C, D, and F sharp," continued Winnie. "But the minstrel looked at his instruments and wondered if it wouldn't be pretty to play something else on each of them."

"If he had tried it," said Ned dryly, "he *would* have been surprised."

"It would have sounded like the tuning of an orchestra," said Minnie.

"Did you ever hear that?" asked Lizzie, with secret envy.

"Of course I did; at the concerts in London."

"A concert is lovely, isn't it?"

"It's just as if you were in heaven."

"In heaven, Minnie?" put in Ned. "I can't fancy people wearing dress-coats and white cravats up there."

They all burst out laughing, so that Gwynne looked up from his folio and smiled.

"Well, the performers would look queer, too, in white garments and wings," said Lizzie.

They laughed anew.

"And so he walked about on the seashore," Winnie went on, "and thought and thought how one could manage to make people sing and play different things and find signs for them to let them know what to play. And he thought, and thought, and thought."

"I often think about things, too; but it's never any use," said Ned.

"Well, but you needn't invent anything," said Freddy. "There are other people to do that."

"Why shouldn't Ned invent something? He's always carving and gluing things, studying chemistry, making powder, and glass, and ships, aren't you, Ned? You want to invent things, don't you?" said Lizzie.

"And he walked so long on the shore, looking at the glittering sea, till he fell asleep. And then he had a strange dream."

"Oh, if it's only a dream, it isn't a real fairy-tale. Any one can dream," said Freddy.

"Have patience," said Daisy. "Wait till you hear what the dream was about."

"I can guess."

"Well, then, you tell," said Winnie angrily.

Freddy put his right leg over his left, and then his left over his right.

"I haven't quite come to it yet," he confessed at last.

"That's always your way, Freddy," said Lizzie disapprovingly.

Gladys was silent ; she did not seem to be listening as yet.

"Go on, Winnie ! Go on, Winnie !" cried the children.

"All at once a sound echoed through the sky as of an immense trombone—a trombone at which earth and heaven and everything shook. 'Now it begins,' thought the minstrel, fancying that Judgment Day had come. But not at all. Suddenly the whole sky grew alive. The stars were all, all, all, little angels, flying and skipping about, and bringing ladders, each of which had five rungs, and shone like everything else."

"And didn't they get burnt?" asked Freddy.

"Do the stars get burnt?" said Winnie; "*they* shine, don't they? Well, so the ladders shone, and they hung them up, always one under the other, quite down to the earth, and then little angels came and sat down on them, each in its place, one with a trumpet, one with a violin, another with a violoncello, another with a flute, and so on. Of some of them one saw nothing but the heads; those were the semibreves; of some also a leg, and they were the breves; or a leg and a wing, standing for quavers; or two wings standing for semiquavers; and four wings for demi-semiquavers, and so on."

"And the crotchets?" asked Daisy.

"The crotchets had dark faces, and stood on one leg. Some of them lay with their heads downward, and held their violin-bows right under their chins; those were the notes on the ledger-lines. And the whole sky was covered with them. The singers had extra ladders to themselves."

"A strange child," said Missy to Gladys. "Yesterday she made me explain scores to her."

"And then," continued Winnie, with radiant eyes, "they

began to sing and play till the minstrel stood amazed ; he had never heard anything like it. And down below the ocean made, ' Bump, whew, whew, whew ! Bump, whew, whew, whew ! Bump, bump, shoo—oo—oo ; ' that was the accompaniment of the trombones and double basses, for which there was no room left in the sky. And the minstrel was so glad, so glad ; for he saw how they might all sing and play together, if each were put in its proper place. And he drew with his finger in the sand what he saw in the sky, and the sand glittered like the sea, and the music looked just the same in it as it did in the sky. And he was so glad. And next morning he thought it had been nothing but a dream ; but then he saw the ladders, with the little heads and wings and legs drawn quite clearly in the sand at his feet ; and he was so glad, so glad. There, Freddy ! " concluded Winnie, jumping lightly from the table.

" Winnie," said Morgan's voice, " what did your minstrel do then in his joy ? "

" He offered the gods twenty thousand bulls and a hundred thousand sheep," said Winnie undauntedly.

" Well done," laughed the sailor. " I wish you joy of your pupil, Missy."

" Winnie is growing big and clever," said Martyn softly to Mrs. Gwynne.

" I'll give you a riddle," said Minnie. " There are a great many ladies running after one another, and yet not able to catch one another. What's that ? "

" Ladies ? " asked Robert.

" Perhaps the clouds ? " exclaimed Freddy.

" The stars ? " said Lizzie.

" The stars don't run," said Winnie.

" Don't they ? " smiled Ned.

" At least we don't see it," replied Winnie.

"You say they are ladies?" asked Robert.

Winnie nodded.

"They have long trains to their dresses, and white veils, and are always running, and we always see them."

"I know," cried Robert—"the waves!"

The little girl clapped her hands.

"She's always making riddles," said Winnie pensively.

"Kathleen would never let Winnie tell fairy-tales, so she used to relate them to Maggie and me," said her little sister.

Morgan started, Gladys rose to her feet, and Mrs. Gwynne came forward, saying it was high time for the children to go to bed. At this, the twins suddenly felt very hungry, whereupon it occurred to the others that they had also grown hungry again, and so milk and bread had to be procured, and the dog had to have a respectable share of it. But at last they gathered all around their father, to let his smile light up their hearts, like a beautiful sunset. And then Mrs. Gwynne and Missy took the children away. Robert laid his arm around Morgan's shoulders and walked up and down with him, while the vicar questioned Ned about the tasks he had to prepare against his return to school. At this moment Gladys went over to Martyn. She had let week after week slip by without carrying out her intention; now she gathered up her courage.

"I have long wished to beg your pardon, Martyn," she whispered.

"My pardon—for what?"

"For my uncivil and unkind behavior."

"Nay, Gladys, it was I who was harsh and unkind, and trampled your flowers almost before they had blown."

"The better for me. They were only thistles and venomous weeds, and I did not know it. Now I know; I have

known for some time, but I was ashamed of telling you and of saying, forgive me !”

When a beautiful girl sues for pardon, the man must be hard-hearted indeed who would not delight in granting it.

“ It was as hard for me to do my duty as a difficult operation would have been,” he said ; “ and I should have begged *your* pardon, if I had dared ; but your displeasure weighed me to the ground.”

“ Oh, I am so ashamed. I was so foolish.”

“ No ; you were good and innocent, and would not believe what you might not see.”

“ Temorah opened my eyes.”

“ Temorah ! How is that possible ? ”

“ Why, she is not mute ! ”

“ But did she speak coherently ? ”

“ No, but plainly, and showed me some things. In the end she took me for Kathleen, and turned upon me with flashing eyes, and then I ran away, like the heroic creature I am.”

“ When and where ? ”

“ At the churchyard.”

Martyn looked down and kept silence.

“ And then I saw that your interference had been providential for me,” Gladys went on ; “ and that I could never thank you sufficiently ; that you saved me from an abyss. And so I reproach myself most bitterly to-day for my blindness and folly.”

“ Leave off accusing yourself, Gladys ; it is enough. We will forget, and begin life anew.”

“ Oh, I wish I could.”

“ We might help each other.”

“ We ? ”

"Yes, it seems to me——" Martyn hesitated ; "it seems to me that our ways in life lie as near together as two rivers on the point of meeting."

Gladys trembled from head to foot.

"O Martyn, Martyn ! such a silly little brook as I am !"

"Streams are brightest near their sources, Gladys ; and if that little brook will trust itself to my current, let it flow with me !"

And Gladys bent her fair head and sank upon his breast in tears of joy.

The two brothers had joined their father and talked busily to him, without looking round ; only Ned and Robert exchanged a furtive smile. It was a beautiful picture—the vicar with that far-away look of his, which seemed already fixed upon the things beyond this life, and his three sons standing around him as sturdy young trees stand round an ancient, weather-beaten oak.

Those two in the dark corner whispered softly to each other, and never emerged into the light until Mrs. Gwynne and Missy came back. Then Martyn put his arm round Gladys and stepped forward with her.

"Father," he said gayly, "dear father, I don't know whether you will think it nice and maidenly, but the fact is, Gladys has just asked me to marry her, or offered to marry me, if that sounds better."

"Horrid ! shameful !" cried Gladys, the glittering drops still rolling from her lashes across her glowing, laughing cheeks. "Thus am I sold and betrayed ! He has not even waited for my consent ; for I haven't said anything, not the least little yes ! He doesn't yet know whether I will have him at all."

"No, of course she couldn't say anything when she fell sobbing into my arms directly ; she had no time to say yes."

"So you can unsay it still if you're quick," laughed Robert.

Mrs. Gwynne folded her child in her arms and did what was certainly most important and mother-like at such a moment—she wept.

The parents both thought of their beautiful child under the turf, and yet they were thankful that another darling of theirs should have the good fortune of becoming the excellent doctor's wife. Only it seemed so sudden, so incredibly sudden, to these two whom the previous year had brought nothing but sorrow. They had been accustomed to look upon Morgan and Gladys as the objects of their most anxious care, and now their hearts were suddenly to be set at rest with regard to one of them at least.

Gladys herself could hardly believe in her betrothal after so many months spent in tears and contrition. She was teased without mercy; for the brothers bore witness that she had got up with a resolute air and gone to Martyn, who had blushed like a girl when she spoke to him. She found it impossible to defend herself against the four young men, and finally took refuge upon her father's knee, hiding her face on his breast and imploring his aid and protection; but she jumped up again directly, afraid of tiring him, and flew to her old governess.

"Missy, they're too bad! You used to defend me against those horrid boys!"

It was a lovely evening, one of those times that pass through life like meteors and leave lasting traces in every heart.

Another joy was in waiting for Gwynne.

"Father," said Morgan, a few days later, coming into the study, which was bright with pleasant winter sunshine; "father, I think I dare enter the Church after all now."

Gwynne felt his heart swell almost alarmingly; but one can bear a great deal of joy without succumbing.

"Indeed, my son? You have conquered?"

"Conquered, father? Ah, I am sadly beaten, and my glowing enthusiasm has made way for duty in its plain gray garb. But I will no longer question the ways of Providence. I will be patient and try to grow faithful like you, and pray as the children do: 'Dear Lord, make me good, that I may go to heaven.' Maybe that will avail me more than all my wild and useless struggles did."

"But not with a weary heart, my son?"

"No, my weariness seems to be passing away with the rest; I long for work."

"And you can put your former self away from you like a faded garment?"

"Yes, father, I think I can."

"God bless you, my child; I thank him that he has let me live to see this hour. Gladys and you! Una was in good keeping, already. But I had to pray a good deal for you and Gladys before your dear souls were saved."

"Yes, we were both mistaken; and yet those mistakes were far, far sweeter than reality is!"

"There will come a time when you will say that no longer."

"I will never say it again, father!"

"Ah, I did not mean with your lips."

The children received the news of Gladys' betrothal with various feelings. Freddy thought it all right, Daisy was delighted, Lizzie said, "Why, Gladys had always detested Martyn;" Minnie remarked, she had thought Gladys would marry Llewellyn, and Winnie was grave and said nothing at all.

One warm morning in February, Morgan entered his

mother's room, but did not find her there. In her stead, Winnie was standing at the writing-table, her chin in her hand, her eyes fixed on Una's portrait, her foot softly beating time to a very low melody. Morgan held his breath. By and by the low murmuring merged into words, and Winnie sang :

" Dear Una, do not feel so sad,
I'll bring you snowdrops bright,
To ring the spring upon your grave;
They are no wedding bells.

" Dear Una, birds are singing loud,
The wood is gay with sound,
They chirp and twitter round the church,
They sing no marriage hymn.

" Dear Una, laurels bloom, and sloes,
And almonds, plums, and pears ;
The smallest shrub is decked with bloom,
But not the myrtle tree.

" Dear Una, and a rime fell down
Till all the ground was white,
It lies so fair on tender grass,
It is no bridal veil.

" Dear Una, I remember you,
I think of you, and sing
Before your image, by your grave;
Oh, do not feel so lonely."

She could hardly finish her song for crying. Suddenly she felt a friendly arm around her ; Morgan took her gently on his lap and said in a very low voice :

" Surely the dead never feel sad or lonely any more, and smile at everything that is done on earth. I don't think they know jealousy either, for they must feel so much happier than the happiest betrothed."

"But how can Martyn go to heaven and stand before Una?"

"I think Una will receive him and all of us with a happy smile, and no longer ask who has been husband and wife, brother and sister."

"But that's so sad!"

"Why should it be sad?"

"When I have missed my parents for ever so long, and then they don't remember that I have been their child, instead of taking me on their lap and saying—'My own little girl!'"

"They can do that all the same, and need not grieve if you have been married and loved your own children in the mean time. Your husband and children will make you forget them as little on earth as they will forget you in heaven."

Morgan was so strongly moved that he needed all his self-control to answer her judiciously. There were all his doubts and questions on innocent and childish lips, and he saw that she was not convinced but went on pondering.

"On her deathbed Una placed Gladys' hand in Martyn's and said repeatedly: 'Gladys and Martyn! Gladys and Martyn!' So you see she felt like a heavenly angel even before she quitted the earth."

"What did she say besides?"

At this question Morgan remembered for the first time what she had said besides; he looked at the child in his lap, and saw that the child was standing on the verge of maidenhood, while Kathleen—he put his hand to his brow.

"She said," he continued, feeling the necessity of saying something in answer to her searching glance, "she said our father would follow her very soon."

"And must he die?"

"I fear so, dear Winnie."

"My best friend," sobbed the child, and there was no consoling her. She cried on Morgan's breast as if her little heart would break. Morgan let her weep; he was so engrossed by his own sorrow at that moment that he had no consolation to offer her. But after a while he said:

"Would my father be satisfied with his little daughter, the darling of his soul, as he calls you, if he saw you so inconsolable? My father is fond of courageous Christians."

"But he cannot leave us? God must see that we cannot bear to lose him!"

"Child, child! God knows very well what we can and what we cannot bear."

"No, no, no!" cried the child frantically. "He did not know that my mother could not bear the life that wicked boy was leading her. He did not know that Kathleen ill-treated us. He did not know——"

"If he did not, why did he bring you here to our peaceful home?"

"But my mother?"

"Perhaps he means to teach her to be strong."

"There now, you see that he doesn't know things."

"Why?"

"She's growing weaker every day."

"Oh, only in body."

"You think so? I'll tell you something, but you won't repeat it to anybody?"

"No."

"Not to Missy?"

"No."

"Not to your mother?"

"No, child."

"Nor to your father?"

"But Winnie! When I promise not to do so."

"Well, you know, he always comes at night, to avoid being seen."

"Who?"

"Why, Tom of course. And she never sends him away, she never says: 'Go away, wicked boy!' Never. And the other evening he was here, quite late, and called me into the garden."

"Who, Tom?"

"Yes, Tom. Why do you grow so pale? Is he a robber?" asked the child, with dilated eyes.

"Almost," said Morgan between his teeth.

"Well, I was dreadfully afraid of him, too, for he rolled his eyes and said, 'Our mother must die,' and when I cried, he shook me, and said, 'Hush, little——,' such an ugly word! And then he wanted me to ask your mother for money for myself, and then to give it to him; he threatened to carry me away into the forest and beat me till I would promise to do so, and as he spoke he wanted to put his handkerchief over my mouth, and I was so frightened that I promised him everything. Since then I cannot sleep for fear at night, and I dare not go into the garden at all. I fancy there's somebody hid behind every bush. Is he a robber, Morgan?"

Winnie had certainly intended to rouse her companion's sympathy, but the effect of her account upon him far surpassed her expectations. The veins in his forehead swelled as if they would burst, he ground his teeth, and clenched his fists, and muttered words that were unintelligible to the child.

"I've prayed so much that God would show me what I ought to do, but he was quite silent."

"Was he? Has he not sent me here to-day, to tell you:

do not be afraid, a promise extorted by violence is no promise. Let your conscience be at rest. And as to—that scoundrel, I shall make it my business to prevent his coming here again. So you see God has heard your innocent prayer, my poor child, my poor, poor little skeptic.”

Winnie felt elated to see Morgan so strongly moved at the thoughts which had secretly troubled her so much.

“You will not be afraid now, will you, my child!”

“No, I’ll try not. But now I’ve already got into the way of being afraid.”

“Oh, no; you must only remember that God is always near and ready to protect you if you call to him.”

“But suppose Tom had carried me off?”

“*Did* he?”

“No, but he made me do a wicked thing. I promised what I did not mean to keep.”

“God will forgive you that falsehood, because you were so frightened at the time. For you never told stories before, did you, Winnie?”

“No; but Kathleen was always telling stories and getting me into trouble without my fault. And Tom tells stories; no, you can’t think how untruthful he is. He’ll declare he never dreamt of things which he has been saying two minutes before. We used both just look at each other, Minnie and I, when he did so; for mamma believed *him*, and not us. As to Kathleen, she didn’t really believe him, you know; but she was so crazily in love with him. She gave him everything, even her silk stockings, and took all our little trinkets away; and then they said it was for poor people. Kathleen was a very bad girl. How she used to beat me!—and then say she hadn’t. She was a bad girl. And when Tom kissed her, she would forbid my telling anybody. I asked her why. And she said because

he wasn't her own brother. Now, I kiss whom I please, and always tell ; I kiss you, and you're not my brother. But I like you a thousand, a hundred thousand, a million times better than Tom. But she knew very well that Tom was a wicked boy, and yet she kissed him. Won't he come again ? I'm a little afraid still, Morgan ; for if I have nothing to give him next time, he'll carry me off into the wood and beat me half-dead ! Yes, he will, Morgan ! He really will ! " The child shuddered.

" I cannot understand how he dared to come here at all."

" Perhaps he had other robbers with him."

Morgan smiled. " No, robbers are not in the habit of roaming about as they do in the fairy-tales. But tell me, does Missy permit you to walk in the garden after dark ?"

" I hadn't asked her."

" There, you see, that was your punishment. And you think God does not see or guard you. Whenever we do not obey his will, he punishes us."

" Has he ever punished you ?" asked Winnie, dropping her voice, as if she were touching upon a profound secret.

" Me ? Oh, yes ; terribly."

The words escaped him almost against his will, and he sat with bowed head, lost in thought. Winnie gazed at him with intense interest.

" Had you been disobedient ?" she asked, after a pause.

He started, and seemed but now to remember with whom he was speaking.

" I ? Yes, I was disobedient. I did like you, I doubted his kindness and his power, and then he smote me so that I could not recover from the blow for a long time afterward."

" God smote you ?"

" Yes."

"And—and—has he forgiven you now?"

Morgan smiled. "I hope so, deary."

"I saw you," she said very softly.

"Me? Where?"

"In the forest; you were lying on the ground and crying dreadfully. And I was so silly, I got frightened and ran away, and never told anybody. But I had seen you, and kept wondering why you had cried so dreadfully."

Morgan pressed his lips on Winnie's hair to hide their trembling.

"And I thought how good you were, and how bad Tom was; for he never cries; and you, you cried and said 'My God!' I was very near crying myself, because I thought your father would die; but he didn't."

"I fear we shall not have him with us much longer, Winnie; but we will bear that as he likes people to bear things, like courageous Christians."

"Shall you be able to preach as beautifully as he does?"

"Ah, if that could be!"

"Can't you *will* it?"

"Can you *will* to invent a song?"

Winnie laughed.

"No, but that's different; songs come of themselves. So—you know; from one's chest and a little from one's eyes, too. So—you know. The mouth only repeats what the ears hear. Do you think it's the angels that bring the songs one hears in one's sleep?"

"To be sure it is, child."

"Then the angels will also teach you to preach."

"Will you ask them to do so, every evening, Winnie?"

"Oh, willingly, willingly! And then you'll never cry again?"

"Never? O Winnie! Who could promise never to cry again?"

"But if you can preach beautifully."

"Well?"

"Then you needn't ever cry again."

"What do you mean?"

"Why, when I'm inclined to cry, I make a song and then I'm all right again."

"I wish I could also make songs."

"But that's so easy :

"Come, dear song, and sally
Forth as swallows wing!
Float o'er hill and valley,
Like a breeze in spring.

"So, you see; not beautifully, you know. I don't mean that it's beautiful; but it's as easy as talking, or thinking, or singing. It comes of itself. Where should the birds get it from if it didn't?"

"To be sure. It comes so to the birds, and to Llewellyn too."

"Yes, and Llewellyn never cries, and always sings. Why don't you try to be like Llewellyn?"

"Perhaps because I have no white beard yet. He didn't always laugh, they say, when he was young."

"Are you very fond of Martyn?"

"Very."

"As if he were your brother?"

"As if he were my dearest brother."

"Why did Gladys dislike him so long?"

"Because God had sent him to interfere when Gladys wanted to make a mistake and like Tom."

"She wanted to like Tom?"

"Yes, and Martyn told her she should not."

"A pity she didn't ask me before she thought about him."

"Perhaps she would not have believed you."

"Well, did she believe Martyn?"

"Not at once, but afterward."

"Ah! and since then she's fond of him."

"Since then she loves him. She told me Martyn was the angel who had preserved her."

"Indeed?" said Winnie, growing very thoughtful again.

"Why doesn't Martyn speak to my mother too?"

"Don't you think that your mother knows Tom's character very well?"

"Not very well, because she doesn't want to."

"Just fancy, Winnie—a mother. When a poor creature is disowned by his mother, he has nobody left in all the world to forgive him."

"Tom shouldn't be forgiven by anybody,"

"How can we tell? Don't you know the parable of the prodigal son?"

"Oh, yes, very well; it always reminds me of Tom."

"Well?"

"To tell the truth—but you mustn't repeat it—I can't help thinking his brother was right."

"But, Winnie!"

"Well, you see, it was hard upon the good son; and good people are generally served that way; nobody thinks of them."

Morgan felt greatly inclined to laugh, but he controlled himself and said gravely:

"If he had been a really good brother, he would have rejoiced with his father, when the old man had been so grieved at the prodigal's absence."

Here the conversation was interrupted by the entrance of Mrs. Gwynne, who looked very tired. Their father had had a bad attack, she said, but was asleep now: Gladys and Martyn were staying with him, that she might rest a few minutes.

"Will you sit down beside me and give me your hand, till I grow calm, my boy? And Winnie will sing softly. Then perhaps I can sleep a little."

They did as they were bidden. Morgan tenderly smoothed the hair, which was so rapidly turning gray, from his mother's temples, as he placed a little cushion under her head; and then he sat down by her, fondling and kissing her hand with almost feminine gentleness, while Winnie slipped into the remotest corner of the room, and sang as softly as a bird at daybreak:

"And when the angels come, they look
Magnificent and strong;
And when the angels sing, it sounds
Like gentlest ocean song.

"And when the angels guard thy steps,
Discard thou fear and pain!
And when the angels pardon thee,
Then grow thou glad again!

"And when thou hear'st the angels call,
Uplift thy soul on high
Unto thy Father's heart, and seek
Thy home beyond the sky!"

The soft singing really seemed to lull Mrs. Gwynne into slumber, and Morgan gazed sorrowfully at the lines which grief had drawn in her noble face; they were more conspicuous as she lay there, still and pale, than when she moved, flushed with the stir of daily life. Morgan and Win-

nie hardly dared to breathe for fear of rousing her, when a deep, sobbing sigh rose to her lips, and they exchanged a look of intelligence.

And then Winnie's thoughts wandered away into dream-land, and her active little head was busy inventing some new fairy-tale. Morgan watched the sleeping mother and the dreaming child, and presently fell into so deep a reverie himself, that he seemed also to be following some wonderful road through the vast mystery of life.

CHAPTER XXI.

NEMESIS.

LEWES had returned to his lonely home with such a dull, heavy sorrow at his heart, that the air seemed to choke him, and he opened his window in the vain hope of breathing more freely. Why had she been so afraid of seeing him? He had thought to give her pleasure, and she was still under the delusion that it was the money for those diamonds which he brought her, gradually, by installments, as she wrote for it. He had done what would make him a criminal in her eyes, as it did in his own; but she could have no suspicion of that yet, least of all a suspicion of his having done it for her sake? Why was she so afraid? Why could she not support his presence? He racked his brain to remember when and where he could have displeased her. In vain.

Since his life had become one of constant anxiety, Lewes had grown unaccustomed to sleep. He acted the fraud he had committed over and over again in his mind. He had written to their Smyrna correspondent requesting a trifling payment on account, and submitted the letter to his em-

ployer, among the rest of the business correspondence. But the letter Vaughan really signed had been slipped in at the last moment and named a sum of £3000. Lewes had afterward intercepted the draft and gone to the bank to cash it himself, as he dared not draw any of the under clerks into his confidence. It was this money he kept at his lodgings and dealt out to Edleen as sparingly as he could ; and yet it was dwindling away with terrible rapidity. And he knew it could only be a few weeks now before the account-current would arrive from Smyrna and lead to the discovery of his deed. Every breath of spring, every swelling bud, made the blood surge up feverishly to his temples. He grew so thin that old Owen felt greatly alarmed about his young friend, and consulted with his employer as to what ought to be done to restore his health. They knew of what importance his financial talents were to the firm, how much profit his clever combinations and unerring foresight had brought them.

"I have not slept well of late," said Lewes, dropping his eyes before Owen's penetrating glance, when the latter spoke to him on the subject.

"My friend, I really think you are in love."

Lewes's face flushed as hotly as a very pale face can flush.

"I have little time for such trifling, I should think ; I'm in love with my figures. You know that they are my sole passion, and that I find as much poetry in them as other men do in their loves."

"Yes, yes, I know ; but that doesn't make one ill."

"No ; but restless at times."

"If we could only do without you, we'd send you to Scotland for a month. But then, you don't fish or shoot."

"No, I'm a bookworm ; good for no place but the of-

fice. If you crushed me underfoot, you'd find me dust all through."

Owen shook his head. "Nonsense, my friend! Your quick blood has twice surged to your face and left it again since my question. That doesn't look like dust, but like the throbbing of a very human heart. However, you must not mistake my warm sympathy for indiscretion, whatever you do. We'll say no more about it."

"Won't you spend a few days at my place in Wales?" said Vaughan to him. "You know you are always welcome to my wife, and there's no possibility of her coming to London this spring, she is so ill."

"I had rather stay here just now."

"As you please. I should only like to see you in good health."

Lewes sometimes really thought of rubbing his cheeks, as sickly girls do when they expect visitors; but it would have been of little use, he would have looked all the whiter afterward.

Tom had come to him once or twice, and he had given him small sums of money on condition that he would stay in London and not trouble his mother. Tom was beginning to look exceedingly shabby. His dress and appearance showed unmistakable traces of neglect. Unshaved, unkempt, very nearly unwashed, he wore an expression that made one think involuntarily of crime when one looked at him. His green eyes moved unsteadily; his speech was still insolent and careless, but like a drunkard's or a lunatic's.

"And this is the man for whom I have become a—a thief!" thought Lewes. The terrible word rang and crashed in his brain. And having heard it once, he heard it incessantly, by day and by night, throbbing in his head,

hammering at his heart, quivering in every exterior sound : Thief, thief, thief, thief ! It was enough to make one go mad.

And the London parks grew green, and people rode and drove about in them as usual. Lewes had never thought the world so unwarrantably gay as he did this spring. What could life offer these people ? It was such a wretched business after all, rotten and insipid from beginning to end. And had they no cause of fear, any of them ? He prayed for strength to remain firm, and not to betray the woman of his heart when the discovery should be made. His thoughts were a torture to him. Sometimes remorse overcame him, hot, piercing, scorching, showing him the uselessness and folly of committing a crime to spare a woman a few tears. Then he felt as if a time must come when he should hate Edleen, when he should feel tempted to grasp her delicate wrists and cry out to her that her maternal love had been a crime. But ere that time arrived she would have died and taken her sin and her sorrows down to the grave with her, to that everlasting peace where even a mother's anxious heart is set at rest. If she would only die before the discovery of his crime, the motives of which would be clear and manifest to her alone ! He would have wished to spare her that. But one cannot spare any human beings, least of all those one loves, what they are destined by fate to undergo.

One fair morning Vaughan sent for Lewes and Owen to come to his office immediately.

" Here's a strange story," he said. " The balance account from Smyrna, with £3000 paid on account, of which I haven't the slightest recollection. Lewes, will you kindly get the books and let us compare dates ? "

Lewes obeyed in silence.

"How strange!" said Owen. "What can it mean?"

They examined the books; but there was no trace anywhere of a payment from Smyrna. They looked and compared a long time, and at last Vaughan wrote a telegram, asking for an explanation. The answer was that his own letter would be sent him by way of proof. During the days that passed before its arrival they exhausted themselves in suppositions. The idea occurred to them that some former cashier of the firm's might have forged the letter. They sent to the bank to inquire whether such a sum had been handed over to any one. Yes, was the answer, under such and such a date.

"I think," said Lewes very quietly, "you had better place the affair in the hands of the police, instead of making random guesses and perhaps accusing some one who is innocent."

Vaughan sent for a police-officer, showed him the books, and asked him to take the matter in hand.

"Have you no recollection of the letter you are said to have sent to Smyrna?" the officer asked him.

"I fancy I remember signing some unimportant letter which Mr. Lewes here placed before me."

"Was it in Mr. Lewes's own hand?"

"I don't remember. Perhaps one of the clerks made a mistake, and the figures escaped our attention; eh, Lewes?"

"Yes," said Lewes, "perhaps." His voice sounded calm and monotonous.

"I shall go to the bank and try to find out what kind of person cashed the money."

No sooner said than done. The police-officer drove to the bank, and asked whether any of the cashiers remembered to whom they had paid out the sum of £3000 from Smyrna on such and such a day.

"Yes," said one of them, "he would recognize the gentleman, if he saw him."

"Don't you recollect?" cried another, "I said at the time, how queer it was that Mr. Lewes should have come for the money himself?"

"Was it Mr. Lewes? Can you swear to that?"

"Well, I should like to be quite sure before I swear."

"And you will recognize the gentleman who came for the money?"

"Yes, certainly."

Vaughan, Owen, and Lewes sat together in silence. They looked as if they had been turned to marble. Presently there was a stir without. The three men were requested to step into the outer office, where the clerks were at work; the police-officer came in with two constables and the two cashiers from the bank.

"Will you point out the person in this room, who came for the money from Smyrna," he said to the latter.

A breathless silence followed.

"Mr. Lewes," said the one in a low voice, while the other walked up to him and said, decidedly:

"This gentleman cashed the money."

"Lewes!" exclaimed Vaughan and Owen in one breath.

At that moment the post was brought in, and the letter from Smyrna lay in Vaughan's hand. He tore it open, and showed the inclosure to Owen and the officer.

"Is that Mr. Lewes's handwriting?" the latter asked.

"It looks like it," replied Owen, in a trembling voice, "but it may be forged."

"It is not forged," said Lewes—his lips had turned white, but his voice was calm and clear. "I wrote it and obtained Mr. Vaughan's signature to it."

"Lewes!" cried Owen, and the blood rushed hotly into

his face. "Lewes, you are mad ! It's not true ! Lewes, try to think ! You must be delirious—you must be raving ! Don't listen to him, gentlemen, he has been ill for some time past !"

"I must request you to restrain yourself," interrupted the officer ; "the less said just now, the better."

Vaughan stood gazing at Lewes in silence.

"Lewes," he said at length, "I have trusted you implicitly, and I feel tempted to ask your pardon for being obliged to doubt your integrity now. I cast about for proofs against my own senses."

"You will not find any," whispered Lewes.

"Please prepare to follow me," said the police-officer.

There was a commotion in the room, as if a shell had exploded ; some were struck dumb, others talked excitedly. Owen wept outright. He had laid his hands on Lewes's shoulders, and was unconscious of the big drops falling from his honest eyes. Lewes stood like a martyr at the stake, looking at Owen as compassionately as if he pitied his old friend for a sorrow in which he had no part himself.

"Lewes," said Owen again. "O Lewes ! you have not done that. I would as soon believe it of myself. It's impossible ! It's not true ! Lewes, Lewes, don't accuse yourself of what some other may have done ! Why, the man looks as innocent as a saint, as calm as only a good conscience can make one ! It's not true ! it can't be ! There's a terrible mistake somewhere !"

"Lewes !" said Vaughan, "why did you not confess the truth to me ? I would not have exposed you to this shame and misery. I should have helped you. O Lewes ! why did you not speak ? Had I deserved such want of confidence from you ?"

A strange, eloquent look from Lewes's clear eyes seemed to answer, "Yes, you had," as he almost imperceptibly bent his head. And then he was gone, and those who remained behind stared at the spot where he had but just been standing, deeply impressing them all. They all felt uneasy, as though every one's integrity must be questioned in future, as though no one could trust his neighbor any more, since Lewes had become a criminal. Some said he had always been strange, others declared they would never believe anybody again, and others muttered there was no such thing as getting rich by honest means. But they only spoke in whispers, glancing shyly at the door through which Vaughan and Owen had disappeared.

Owen was in such a state of excitement that big drops of perspiration stood upon his brow.

"It is unnatural, quite unnatural," he said repeatedly. "And if Lewes insists on making a martyr of himself, there are people who will get him out of prison by sheer violence!"

Owen was present when Lewes's lodging was searched. He knew the exact amount of his friend's savings, the very numbers of his papers; but no trace was found of them, nothing, indeed, but a small remnant of the fatal money wrapped up in paper and superscribed—"the last." What had become of the small fortune! And what did that word signify? All account-books had evidently been burnt; Owen knew that Lewes kept his private affairs in scrupulous order. "Whenever I die, I want to be buried with my own money; I want the poor to get something and all my property to be found in its place. I have also made my will, for I hate disorder." Such remarks of his Owen could quote by the score. How did that agree with the reality? "I know for certain that he kept his books in here, and his

money and will in there," said Owen. "What can have become of it all?"

Suddenly he struck his forehead with his clenched fist, hurried to his lodgings, flung some clothes into a bag, and was gone without telling whither he went.

On the following day he stood before Kathleen.

"I must see Mrs. Vaughan directly."

"Impossible. She is in bed."

"I know her room; it doesn't matter if she is."

Kathleen tried to detain him, but oak doors and bars of iron would have yielded to the old man's determination, and Edleen trembled among her cushions when he suddenly appeared before her, his face red with fury, his eyes flashing indignantly.

"I have a very grave communication to make to you, which admits of no delay," he said, regardless of the thin hands she folded so tremulously. "Our excellent Lewes has been accused of theft and arrested."

"On account of stones?" cried Edleen, raising herself on her elbow with a frightened look.

"What stones?" asked Owen amazed.

Edleen sank back upon the cushions, covering her face with her bloodless hands.

"Don't you see what you are doing?" said Kathleen angrily.

"I see nothing but a weak woman, who will cause the ruin of an honest man if she does not speak."

He took her wrists and drew her hands from her face. "Of what stones are you speaking? What do you fancy to be the reason of Lewes's apprehension?"

"How can I tell you?" rejoined Edleen, so coldly that Owen began to fear that he was beaten. She had had time to think, two seconds' time; that had been far too much.

"I know it is your fault," continued the old man ; "yours and your wretched son's. I know, don't deny it. It is already sin enough if you keep silence. Don't you know that that man has nothing but his honest name? Where is the money he sent you?"

"He did not send me any."

"Good Heavens, no! He brought it himself; he brought you money every time he came here."

"Perhaps that money was mine."

"Yours? Then tell me how you got it. Did you sell your dresses, or your ornaments, or your honor, or all three together? Well! Speak! You turned the poor fellow's brain with your looks. And when nothing was left, you said: 'Money, money, money! for Heaven's sake.' And you wrung your hands. Good Heavens, is there no torture that will force the truth from you?"

"I can bear a good deal of torture," said Edleen, with one of those smiles that sometimes pass over the faces of people dying in great pain, and are more terrible than moans and lamentations.

"Is it right that you should try to save your son, who is past saving, by sacrificing the life of an honest man? For if he commits suicide in prison, it will be your fault, woman. Have you no heart, no fear of the retribution for your sin? Do you think there is no hell for you to go to?"

"Oh, yes, I have lived in it this long while."

"And so you think it is all the same whom you drag down with you, and how unhappy you have made your husband, and every one of your children, and the poor girl here, who looks as if she were as wretched as any of them. Woman! how shall I force those lips to tell me the truth which I see with my eyes, and grasp with my hands? I'll drag you before the courts if you don't confess."

"By what right? What wrong have I done?"

Owen tore his gray hair, and his heart beat so loud that he heard it more plainly than Edleen's weak voice.

"He went to prison like a martyr, and you, you wash your hands in the innocence you profess. But where's the difference between you and other lost women? Where? Have you not profited by a man's weakness? So do they. Have you not deceived your husband? So do they. Have you not brought shame over the house and suffered the pure to be defiled? All, all, just like them, under the disguise of touching, maternal affection. Woman, woman, oh that I could crush that disgusting affection under my feet! Instead of chastising your son, you fondled him. Instead of driving him from your door you fed him. Instead of sending him to prison, which is much too good a place for him, you suffered innocent people to go there. But it shall not avail you. As truly as old Owen lives, retribution shall fall on you and your son, ingrates that you are!"

With these words he strode from the room and from the house, accepting neither food nor drink. He hastened back to London, and, by Vaughan's aid, obtained admittance to the prisoner. His intense excitement was allayed by the expression he saw in his friend's countenance. He found him sitting on a bench, his emaciated hands folded on the table, his face turned toward the window, through the bars of which a bit of sky was visible. He slowly looked around at the visitor and smiled.

"I know everything; don't try to deny it," cried Owen.

"Have I denied anything?" said Lewes.

"You did it for that woman—for his wife! Don't deny it! You never took a shilling for yourself—not a shilling!"

"Well, does that diminish my guilt?"

"No, it makes it a thousand times greater!" cried Owen. "Can't you understand, man, that you had no right to sacrifice your good name, no right whatever!"

"My name is my own! I can do with it what I please."

"No, you can't; that is just what you had no right to do! But, Lewes, are you quite blind? Don't you know what you have at stake?"

"Oh, yes; I have known it all along."

"And first you gave all your own property."

"Is it anybody's business if I did?"

"But, man, it diminishes your guilt."

"What of that now?"

"Only so much that I shall get you out of prison, that you shall be free and respected again, that our firm shall be spared the shame you would have brought upon it."

"Every house can have dishonest servants."

"Lewes, I cannot bear to hear you! You make me wild. And she, the woman, would not confess to her guilt!"

"*Who?*" cried Lewes, starting up and grasping Owen's arm. His tranquillity had vanquished at a flash.

"Why, the adored Edleen."

"What would she not confess?"

"That it was all her doing."

"Who asked her?"

Owen was silenced for a moment by the quivering wrath in Lewes's eyes. "I," he said at last, almost humbly.

"And you told her——"

"That you were in prison. She said something about stones, that I did not understand, nor wish to understand, and I tried to shake her, but she was cold and silent in spite of all I could say."

Lewes dropped down upon the bench and hid his face in his hands, groaning aloud.

"But, dear Lewes, I cannot let you ruin yourself in this miserable way. You don't know what awaits you, what a horrible punishment——"

"Ah! Why—why did you do that?"

"What am I to do with the man now? Heaven help me!"

"You have robbed me of my only consolation."

"Your only consolation?"

"I should not have lived many more days. Now she knows, I dare not die. Oh, why did you tell her? You should have told her I had gone abroad—or died—anything; but, Owen, Owen—now I dare not die! How cruel!"

"Is it cruel that I want to prevent you from making a martyr of yourself?"

"But perhaps my martyrdom was as sweet to me as happiness is to another."

"You are mad, Lewes, dear friend—raving mad; you will go and get yourself hanged, or at least transported—anything, only to shield that wretched woman and her disreputable son. But you shall not—you are mad!"

"I wish I were."

"But I'll get you out, even before you are brought to trial, before you can commit any more follies, you baby. That woman might talk a saint out of his heavenly inheritance, and he'd thank her still for having been permitted to go to perdition for her sake. As to her, she hardly thanked you, eh? I know—don't gainsay me?"

"Ah, she was in such distress!"

"And what is she in at present? I only want a week's time to get her scapegrace son into my grasp. Vaughan must be kept in ignorance of your story for a week; else he'll

let the scoundrel off, and I mean to bring him to the gallows."

"Owen, have pity! Then everything—my monstrous deed—would have been in vain!"

"So it shall be. Do you fancy Heaven would accept a sacrifice which is against nature and against the law? Nothing of the kind. Nor society either, and society is right. You are mad and cannot, thank Heaven, speak or move; and so old Owen will prove your innocence."

"But Owen—my innocence?"

"Of course. You are only mad, crazy—nothing else!"

"And so I may not die, and I have sinned in vain; and all is over! Owen, Owen, it is inhuman!"

Lewes again dropped his head on the table, and wept like a child.

"Lewes," said the old man, "pray listen to me. How long did you think you would be able to help that wretched woman?"

"Till she died."

"What a pity! I was near killing her."

Lewes started up once more.

"And you call that friendship?" he cried, half beside himself with fury.

"There, my friend, that's right. And now good-by. Be angry with me as long as you can; it's better and more manly, and will sharpen your appetite for dinner. But mind you, if you don't keep quiet, I shall revenge myself upon Edleen."

The old man walked off with his long, energetic strides; not however to seek his own home, but to go in search of Tom. That was no easy task, and it took a good deal of inquiry and driving about and inquiring of the police before the young man was at last discovered, ragged and

half-drunk, at an out-of-the-way public-house. Owen sat down opposite to him and waited till Tom recognized him and looked up at him with uneasy curiosity.

"I have only come to tell you that Lewes has been taken into custody on your account, and that you haven't another shilling to expect from this day forward. Act accordingly!"

Tom had grown very sober.

"I don't want Lewes; I have never wanted him. What have I to do with your master's money and the thieves that steal it? It's no concern of mine."

"Besides this, your mother is dying."

"My mother?" Tom turned pale.

"I merely wished to tell you by way of warning. If I were you I wouldn't throw the money away as you are doing, because it's the last you will have."

And before the young man could collect his thoughts, Owen had disappeared. The old man went to Vaughan's town residence and questioned the servants about Tom. They knew of many thefts which he alone could have committed, and were ready to furnish proofs.

"Very well," said Owen; "but nobody is to be told of the matter except myself."

About a fortnight later several bills for pretty large amounts, bearing Mr. Vaughan's signature, were presented at his office.

"Owen," said he, "what does *this* mean? I never wrote those bills, nor signed them either."

Owen kept his thoughts to himself and said dryly the bills in question must be protested, and if Mr. Vaughan would authorize him to settle the matter, he might as well go to Wales in the mean time, as the news of the latest events seemed to have had a bad effect on Mrs. Vaughan's health.

The necessary forms were gone through, and then Mr.

Vaughan hastened to his wife's sick-bed ; he really felt very anxious about her, the more so as he had not heard or seen anything of Tom. To his surprise, he found the young man seated at his mother's couch, well dressed, and as gayly and arrogantly talkative as usual. Edleen was laughing at his jokes, and looked more animated than she had done for a long time. Tom's presence rendered her oblivious of all her previous agony and distress. Kathleen had withdrawn to the remotest window and was looking out with a dark expression in her eye.

"I hear we have thieves in the house," said Tom composedly to Vaughan.

"We had better not speak of that, my son. Don't you see how it affects your mother?"

Edleen had grown very white.

"Dear me!" said Tom. "Is that of so much consequence? Why, it happens every day."

On the following morning, another forged bill was sent in to Mr. Vaughan from one of the neighboring towns, which he immediately directed to Owen. He found Edleen grown so extremely nervous and sensitive that she would start at the slightest noise, and cast an apprehensive look toward the door.

"Do you expect anything?" he asked her anxiously.

"No, nothing," she replied. "I am only so weak with all my pains just now, that everything frightens me."

"Has Tom asked you for money?"

"No, not at all."

How did he come to put that question to her? Edleen was so agitated that it did not even occur to her to profit by his gentler mood and obtain some money for Tom. And when she thought of it afterward, her courage failed her. *Why* had he asked her that?

But Vaughan had not attached so much importance to his question as the poor woman, conscious of her secret guilt, imagined.

She was indeed afraid of every look and word. She continually expected some great catastrophe to break in upon her, and her husband's aged and grief-worn face looked as terrible to her as some inexorable judge's.

Whenever she remembered her interview with Owen, she was seized with such shivering-fits that she could hardly get warm again. Kathleen nursed her indefatigably, and rarely left the house, even now that Tom was constantly in the sick-room. She never looked at him and gave him no answer, often as he attempted to speak to her. It was just like trying to move a beautiful mute flower, which, though cankered, still holds up its head and demands no pity. Once he even dared to ask her whether she had given up her favorite long walks altogether. But she left the room without turning her head. Another time he told her he had met the witch, who had inquired after her, and whom he had answered that she would come to her before long to embrace her calling. Not a quiver of her lashes betrayed that she heard him, while she shook a stray wasp from her gown and trod upon it.

"Tom," said Edleen, "if you want to set my mind at rest, before I die, enter your step-father's service as his humblest workman, and marry Kathleen."

"Nay, my sweet mother cannot wish to doom me to penal servitude and heavy chains. My sins are great and numerous, it is true, but I am not so far gone as to cry mercy yet."

One day Owen walked into his master's sitting-room.

"I must see your stepson immediately," said he.

"Nothing easier than that. He is here."

Tom was sent for; he looked little pleased at the

summons, and very uncomfortable when he recognized Owen.

"Your time is up," began the latter, fixing his remorseless eyes upon the young man. "You won't do any more mischief. There are those without and stationed round the house who won't let you go at large any more. I've got crushing evidence against you. You have forged bills, you have stolen silver and jewelry, linen and other things of Mr. Vaughan, while you lived at his house in the assumed character of a coachman. You have tampered with your step-father's workmen, cheated your little sisters out of their valuables, and further investigation will show how much of their mother's ornaments ~~has~~ likewise disappeared. Of late you have joined a gang of thieves and taken part in several acts of burglary, one of which was aggravated by willful murder and led to your associates being committed for trial. In short, it is all over with you, and you may consider yourself lucky if you escape hanging."

Tom had averted his face to conceal its pallor, when he felt his step-father's hand laid heavily on his shoulder.

"Tom," said Mr. Vaughan, "is all this true?" But insolent Tom had no word for his justification now.

"Then," said Vaughan, stepping away from him with a heavy sigh, "I fear there is little hope to save you from public ignominy. Poor Edleen!"

Tom started up like an adder.

"Ah!" he cried, snatching a pistol from his breast-pocket, "is that all you can say to us now, after letting me go to rack and ruin and breaking my mother's heart? When I drew bills upon my mother, she paid them though it all but cost her her life; she gave everything she had, she went begging for me; she suffered Lewes to be sent to prison for my sake. You were her enemy and mine all

your life, and I will be revenged upon you, come what may."

"Kill me if you like," said Vaughan, with a look of infinite weariness.

"Kill you? No! That would be no revenge, and would only take me the more surely to the gallows. If I must die, my death shall make you wretched. It shall kill my mother."

With these words he sprang from the room. Vaughan and Owen rushed after him and found him with Edleen, grasping her hands and telling her that he must die that instant. As they entered, he raised the weapon to his temple. But Edleen caught his arm, and then sank upon the floor in a fainting-fit.

Vaughan knelt down beside her, and raised her in his arms. He thought she was dead. Meanwhile, Owen had snatched the pistol from Tom, who was quite willing to have it taken from him, and had given a loud, shrill whistle. In another minute, the room was crowded with policemen, and poor Edleen opened her eyes to see her son in handcuffs.

At that instant, Kathleen confronted him :

"Be accursed! Be accursed! May my curse bring you ruin, and chains, and despair. May it send you to that place to which you dragged all who approached you. Be accursed! My curse be upon you to the end of time!"

"Have pity, Kathleen!" cried the despairing mother. "Do not curse him. Every word stabs me to the heart. Oh, do not curse my poor son. It is curse enough for him that I must die!"

She fell back in another swoon. Tom was taken away, and Owen left the house, feeling that his presence must be unwelcome to all its inmates just then. In his heart he prayed to God that the poor, weak woman might be

delivered from an existence which had been useless, and even pernicious, to her fellow-creatures.

But poor Edleen was not destined to so kindly a fate. She recovered in a few hours' time, and when she recognized her husband, who was still holding her in his arms, she made a movement as if she would turn away from him. But then a better impulse caused her to draw his hand to her lips, and whisper :

"Forgive me, Harry. I have made you very unhappy, and done great wrong. Forgive me, if you can."

He pressed her gently to his breast, and passed his hand over her hair ; but he could not speak.

CHAPTER XXII.

AT HEAVEN'S GATE.

"LLEWELLYN has come !" cried Freddy. "Now we can begin."

The summer sunshine lay rich and golden on the vicarage buildings, beaming upon the family assembled in the ground-floor drawing-room, and casting its warm radiance on the congregation that stood crowded before the open glass doors in the garden, too numerous to find room within.

And now Gladys came forward in her wedding dress, her white veil floating around her like thin mist, her radiant eyes suffused with tears, her lips tremulous with suppressed emotion.

And then the sons wheeled in an arm-chair, in which the gentle, dying man reposed, who had donned his priestly garb for the last time to marry his child and to take the sacrament with his family.

Llewellyn was fain to avert his face ; he could not bear to look at his friend. And when the church-bells rang and the choir intoned a sweet hymn, no eye remained dry, excepting the round orbs of the twins, who stared at Gladys and thought her very handsome, and were quite at a loss to understand why everybody cried so.

That day no splendid sermon flowed from the great, beloved preacher's lips. He breathed quickly and painfully, but his eyes shone with unearthly light, when he read the beautiful words of the English marriage service, and the vows which Gladys said after him in a firm voice, only stopping between the sentences to repress her rising sobs :

"For better or for worse, for richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love, cherish, and to obey ; till death us do part."

"Dear Father in heaven! bless my children!"

That was all the speech the vicar made. But it moved his audience more strongly than anything his fiery soul had ever poured forth. Then he called his family around him and administered the sacrament to them, with so trembling a hand that Morgan was obliged to support the chalice. And then, still holding it with both hands, the young man knelt down before his father, and Gwynne laid his hand upon his head, saying fervently: "O God, accept my son for thy servant, and make him faithful." That was Morgan's most sacred ordination. Llewellyn stood looking on, holding Winnie by the hand.

"And now give me the chalice, my son ; and may it be a peaceful memory in your after life, that your father was the first who received the sacrament from your hand."

Morgan's hand trembled, and Mrs. Gwynne had hidden her streaming eyes on her second son's shoulder, but the burning tears she wept were tears of infinite gratitude for

the happiness of having been the wife of such a man, and the mother of a son whose soul was saved.

Long after, old people would tell their grandchildren of Gladys Gwynne's wedding, of the flowers with which the whole house had been decked, of the singing and the Holy Communion, the angelic loveliness of the bride, and the beauty of the vicarage children.

A few parishioners knelt down and begged Gwynne to administer the sacrament to them once more. Morgan supported his hand, but he saw that his strength was failing, and motioned the rest to stand back.

The people did not depart, however, but continued to sing at short intervals. Freddy came out to them several times. "My father thanks you kindly, and if you are not tired he would like to hear another hymn." The childish voice rang clear across the lawn; the birds sang around, and the afternoon shadows lengthened slowly on the grass. No one thought of going home. Gwynne sat back in his arm-chair, and smiled every time a favorite hymn of his was intoned.

"The struggle is not hard, not at all hard," he whispered. "I see Una smile upon me. I hear the heavenly angels sing. It is not hard!"

Winnie dropped weeping on the ground before him and clung to his feet.

"But you must not die! No, no, we can't bear it! You must not die!"

At a sign from Gwynne, Morgan lifted the child in his arms and held her up to his father.

"Courage, my child, be good, be strong, my little daughter."

The sun was setting when the old man raised himself and sat perfectly erect in his chair.

"Farewell, dear sun ; I thank thee for thy shining," he cried ; and then he sank back into his son's arms and expired.

And the people sang out amid their tears, while Morgan prayed aloud ; and by and by they all grew so still as if they were sharing in his happy resurrection.

They made him a couch before Gladys' marriage altar, set burning candles around him, and did not leave him all the night. Mrs. Gwynne knelt beside him. Gladys, who was still in her wedding dress, sat encircled by Martyn's arm, resting her head upon his shoulder. Morgan prayed in a low voice, and sometimes read a passage from the Bible. The younger sons busied themselves about their mother, bringing her refreshing drink, and wheeling a low cushioned chair so near for her that she could still hold her husband's hand in hers. The village people had dispersed. When Missy would take the little children up to bed, Morgan lifted them, one by one, to their father's beautiful face, that they might kiss it ; then he bade them kneel down, and prayed with them before they stole quietly out of the room. The fragrant night air drifted in through the open doors, at one of which Llewellyn was sitting bathed in moonshine and striking solemn chords on his harp, now low and uncertain, like the sighing of wind harps, now clear and sweet, like echoes of sacred music. Thus he kept watch with his dead friend.

After midnight a beautiful chorale suddenly rose on the air. The people had noiselessly assembled on the lawn once more, and sang for several hours. As they stood in the dark themselves, they could plainly see everything within by the brilliant light of the candles.

That was Gladys and Martyn's wedding night, and it cast its mild, devout radiance over all their after life. Martyn

had long taught his bride to look upon death as a friend, as something natural, that one must not be afraid of ; and a death like this was well qualified to remove the horrors of the grave.

During the singing, a white, sylph-like form glided bare-foot into the room and hid among the flowers. Missy saw it was Winnie, and would have sent her upstairs again ; but Llewellyn called her to him, wrapt her in his cloak and held her on his lap all night long, now and then replying to some whispered question of hers, and listening with her to the singing. The people saw the child and loved her from that moment.

A beautiful sunrise shed such radiance over the corpse that Winnie's heart beat fast with the fancy Gwynne would awake ; but he remained still and cold, and the happy smile did not change on his motionless face.

Missy now persuaded Mrs. Gwynne to withdraw and try to rest a little, and Martyn took his young wife away, that she might lay aside her bridal robes and seek a few minutes' sleep. The brothers stayed in the death-chamber ; but by and by Llewellyn sent them also to rest, asking it as a particular favor to be left to watch with his old friend alone for a while.

More peaceful days than those before the funeral had never been seen. In the evenings, when their day's work was done, the people came and sang for an hour or two. On the fourth day the funeral took place, and was so solemn, so beautiful, that heavenly bliss seemed to have descended to earth to dry the mourners' tears and soothe their pain. The good divine had left peace and comfort behind him, even though his kindly voice would be heard no more.

Mrs. Gwynne remained in the churchyard with Missy, while Martyn gave his arm to his young wife, who looked

touchingly beautiful in her long black dress and veil, and conducted her along the fair green forest-paths to her new home, which she was to enter for the first time that day. The small house was grown all over with roses. Inside it was decked with wreaths and plants like a fairy palace, and Gladys thanked Martyn with tears in her radiant, loving eyes for having made it all so beautiful. Her father's portrait, wreathed with flowers, had been placed on the stand at her bedside ; and Una's full-length picture hung on the wall, half hidden by roses. Gladys was fain to embrace her husband anew for this, and thus their young happiness sprang flourishing from beloved graves and promised soon to grow a sturdy tree.

Morgan strolled alone through the forest, taking leave of the spots where he had struggled so fiercely with doubt and earthly love. He still felt weary with that long struggle—weariness indeed, but victorious. He had thought of Kathleen when he had seen Martyn and Gladys slowly disappear along the flowery pathway ; he had thought of her with a sharp pang of agony, and when he had lifted his eyes, he had fancied he saw her form, her face flit by among the tombstones. He had been tempted to follow her, but had refrained. Now he intended to go away and prepare for his ordination, and it might be a long time before he returned to his old home. Robert, the sailor, had been summoned to start on a three years' voyage round the world, and Ned was to return to school.

The vicarage grew very quiet until Freddy undertook to make as much noise as the four brothers together. Llewellyn stayed till late in autumn. He could not bear to leave Winnie, who developed so quickly under his guidance that Missy began to feel like the poor hen who could not follow her ducklings. Minnie was delicate and affectionate, and

yearning for love. The Gwynne children were more strongly constituted and therefore excellent companions for poor Edleen's all too sensitive little girls.

Kathleen had not only been present at the funeral and knelt on the cross that lay among the rank weeds, but on which Tom's name was plainly visible still—she had also stood before the house at night, and seen Martyn and Gladys sitting side by side, and Llewellyn in the moonshine, and Morgan's manly face bending over the open Bible, and Gwynne, Gwynne with his beautiful, marble-like features composed to eternal rest. She had felt like a doomed soul looking in at heaven's gate; for she was conscious of all the glowing hate and terrible, vengeful thoughts that had convulsed her soul. She knew very well that she had seen the spark fall on Temorah's bed, which set her house on fire. Hitherto she had always lied to herself, denying the fact, but now she judged herself with unrelenting severity. And where was all that great love for which she had burdened her conscience so heavily, for whose sake she was deprived of sleep, and had learned to feel terror? Where was it? She hated Tom from the bottom of her soul, for she saw nothing in him now but his brutal nature. And she was overcome with bitter sorrow at the thought that she had spurned Morgan's pure love from her, after having led him on with kittenish coquetry. Gwynne's silent face preached a sermon more affecting to her than any living tongue had ever done. She stood out there in deep remorse and contrition, close to Temorah, whom her restless wanderings had also brought there, and who stared blankly into the sacred room.

Kathleen *might* have been in there now, a beloved and loving daughter. She tore her handkerchief to shreds, and bit her fingers till they bled. Ay, that was remorse, the

saddest and most useless feeling on earth ; for it regards what can never be changed, what can be undone as little as a river can flow against its current, what one has built and destroyed, and trampled, and defiled *one's self*. Remorse, remorse ! Tom could never have treated her thus, if she had not transgressed before. He had called her a murderess ; he had destroyed her body and soul. Ah, how her heart ached. How the burning thoughts thronged her brain in everlasting sameness, till she envied Temorah her insanity and indifference. She stood so close to the rival she had hated so mortally that she could hear her breathing. Where was her hatred, her thirst for revenge, her young, hot, throbbing heart ? She looked toward Temorah, and pictured the child to herself that had resembled Tom so greatly. Yes, she had seen that spark fall on the bed. Tom had extorted the confession from her that she had seen the spark. But perhaps she had not seen it so plainly after all, as she had fancied afterward. Why had she not gone back when her conscience warned her ? That was what Tom had asked her in a low, thrilling voice, almost hoarsely, and then he had said : " Kathleen, it was my child—I avenge my child, murderess ! "

A shudder passed over her for she felt as if she were hearing him now. But no ! there lay Gwynne immovable, and Martyn was kissing the tears from his young wife's eyes, and Morgan was gently turning a leaf in his Bible ; as he did so, a brighter reflection passed across his face. How changed that face was since the hour when he had confessed his love to her, when he had been so timid and awkward, and so pure and good ! Ah, if she had said " yes," that day ! What *was* there in his face ? Something Kathleen had never seen in it and could not decipher. Was it a reflection from the dead face before him ? For there was some-

thing dead in it, some expression as if he had left the world and his own desires behind him. She felt a great yearning at her heart after those two faces—the dead and the living. Did the spirits of the lost thus stand at heaven's gate and see their dear ones, unable to reach them with word or touch? she asked herself. Just then the singing was resumed, and Morgan turned his face toward her. How sad, and sweet, and exceedingly serious it was. Then she saw Llewellyn bend his head to listen, sitting like a statue in the moonshine by the door. And there was Missy placing a small cushion under Mrs. Gwynne's head. And now Mrs. Gwynne's profile and gray hair were plainly visible against the black pall. Missy kissed her brow and smoothed her hair, and vanished again in the darkness.

Kathleen mused how she herself had been an orphan, how she had no recollection whatever of her mother, and had been so young when her father died as to have had no very clear idea of her loss. Months had passed before she had begun to tell herself dreamily that the dead man had, after all, been her father. He had never thought of her soul, never—only of her beautiful form and charming face. Her long lashes had given him greater pleasure than any accomplishments could have done: "You don't want to be talented; talents are needful to ugly people," he had said. And she had willingly believed him. For she had not been fond of taking trouble. No; and when Edleen had given her a home, the education of the children had been a most distasteful task to her. Just then, Winnie came gliding into the room. She saw the child approach Morgan, and point to a passage in the Bible, raising her large eyes interrogatively to his face. And Morgan passed his arm around her, and softly explained what she wanted to know, one of her

torturing questions : Why must one die ? And what is death ? And what do we take with us ? Kathleen fancied she heard the questions which she had always thought so insupportable, because she had not known what answers to make.

Why did a feeling like burning jealousy dart through her heart at that moment ? Jealousy of what ? Of the child's confiding affection for the young man ? Vaughan had taken his children away from her, had parted with the only joy of his life on her account ; yes, on her account, she was sure of that. Had he found out about her beating Winnie so often, and spitefully opposing her passion for music ? Or did he consider her unfit to associate with children ? Had she no right any longer to approach the pure ? She grew burning hot as she remembered that Winnie had sometimes seen her with Tom, suffering him to take liberties which she ought never to have permitted. Yes, Winnie knew. Had she told at the vicarage ? The idea was unbearable. Kathleen longed to go away, not to see the child any more ; and yet she stayed in spite of herself, and saw Llewellyn fold Winnie to his breast. What beautiful thing was he telling her, to make her face look so radiant ? Kathleen noticed for the first time that Winnie was beautiful, that she had a peculiarly lovely, profound look in her eyes. But she hated the child so bitterly that she could have torn her down from Llewellyn's knees. Winnie had often accused her of being untrue, and she had beaten her for want of better arguments.

" Llewellyn ! Llewellyn ! why did you draw me from the water ? It would have been better, much better for me to have died, for there's no good in me," thought poor Kathleen, remembering how cool the water had been—so cool, so peaceful ! How long her sufferings would have been

over, now—she dared not say, her struggles ; for she knew well that she had never struggled bravely to do right, but had weakly yielded to her every feeling. And why should she struggle now? What was there left for her to attain? She felt herself growing exceedingly bitter. She saw Mrs. Gwynne dry her quiet tears, quite calmly, without sobbing, without despairing, and could not understand her composure. Yes, there was a blissful expression in her face, as if she had died with her beloved, and were passing on to eternal joy with him. The village people had softly intoned a beautiful hymn, and a light breeze from the sea sighed faintly among the trees.

Had Llewellyn kept her terrible confessions secret, or were the Gwynnes informed of them? Had Morgan been warned against her? What had Martyn said, who had watched her fever and despair? Nay, what did it matter? What were the Gwynnes to her now? Where could she go when Edleen died? What would become of her? A beggar!

Oh, why had Llewellyn saved her? How cruel! Just then the singing ceased, and Morgan read, with a deep clear voice, the comforting words: "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

The listeners thrilled with those sounds; it was as if Gwynne had spoken, the voice and utterance resembled his so closely. Kathleen shivered. She thought of that sermon after her first act of revenge with which she had sought to brand Temorah in the sight of all the community and in her own. It had been a bad action; but how she had suffered! Tom had been unworthy of her bestowing a second look upon him. But she had loved him so blindly that every movement of his neck and hands, his gait, his

laugh, had charmed her. How handsome he had been when they had borne him home in triumph !

" I must wash," said Temorah, touching Kathleen's arm ; " don't you see ? I must wash, for I have nothing to give my baby. Kathleen has burnt my goat, and I've no milk left ; so I must wash, wash, wash."

With these words she turned away ; Kathleen trembled like leaves in a morning breeze, and had made a movement to shake Temorah off. As she stirred, a moonbeam fell across her and discovered her to Martyn's quick eyes.

" There's Kathleen on the lawn," he whispered almost inaudibly. But Morgan heard him in the deep silence. He lifted his head and saw her stand outside, and then he slowly turned to look at his sleeping father. He thought of his father's courage and fortitude in the bitterest hour of his life, and vowed to be strong and courageous, that he might prove worthy of him. His heart beat fast for a moment and the letters swam before his eyes. Poor, poor Kathleen was standing out there, and he dared not even approach and try to comfort her. Nay, but he would offer her some words of consolation. He turned the page, raised his voice a little, and read out into the silent night :

" Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you ; not as the world giveth give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

He did not dare to look out again ; he thought he could not bear it. So he turned the leaves once more and read :

" For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear ; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God : And if

children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God."

Just then Kathleen noticed that Winnie had become aware of her presence, and was drawing Llewellyn's attention to her, and she quickly disappeared in the dark shade of the trees.

On the following night she came again, but only for a short time. For she could hardly leave Edleen now. Her cousin's strength was waning fast, and only the hope that Tom might still be acquitted kept her alive. Kathleen spied a moment when Llewellyn was sitting alone by his dead friend, to come and kneel down on the stone steps, with her head leaning against the door-post. Llewellyn motioned her in, and she timidly approached the death-bed. There she fell upon her knees, and gazed at Gwynne with such despair in her eyes that Llewellyn laid his hand upon her head and whispered :

"My poor child, since God has preserved your life, try to bear up against your fate! Be patient, and trust in him."

Kathleen was mute and did not weep. But her trembling hands closed tightly round Llewellyn's. Then she thought she heard a footstep, and glided from the room, disappearing quickly in the outer darkness, like an erring spirit. Still something like peace had come over her. The minstrel had called her into that holy chamber, her, the sinner; he had not cast her off, and had spoken words of comfort to her. She really felt somewhat consoled; her icy coldness

and bitterness seemed to give way a little, as if the warm light from the flowery death-chamber had melted them.

On the same night Vaughan had also come for a few minutes. Llewellyn saw an old, bent, and white-haired man enter the room, and hardly recognized him till he saw his eyes fixed on his friend's peaceful countenance, and filling with heavy tears. Vaughan burst into a passion of sobs that seemed to shake all his body. Llewellyn brought him a seat, and gazed sorrowfully at the proud, strong man who was thus bowed to the dust. He did not suspect what bitter reproaches Vaughan read from the vicar's silent lips, how hot the pain was that gnawed at his heart, how he longed to cry out loud in his agony, and to rouse Gwynne from his death-sleep with the question: "Had I deserved that?" And he could not confide his misery to any one; he could not tell any one what discoveries he was making every day.

Llewellyn put his hand on his shoulder and did not speak until his passion was over.

"Poor friend," he said at last.

Vaughan could not speak; he could only gaze at the dead man and envy him his heavenly peace, his painless smile. And this man had died with grief; his child's death had broken his heart; and what was Una's death to the misfortune that was breaking in upon Vaughan. And *he* lived.

Presently Mrs. Gwynne came in with all the dignity of her sacred grief, and even Vaughan grew still when he saw her.

"He looks so beautiful, does he not?" she said. "I feel quite resigned. Four-and-twenty years of unalloyed happiness. I dare not complain. He looks so beautiful! I must gaze upon him still—enough to last me all my life."

"God be thanked that my children are in those hands!"

And so even the unhappy Vaughan bore a consoling thought away with him from Gwynne's death-bed.

And life went on inexorably, over graves and broken hearts, renewing itself out of its own ruins. The hammers rang on in the mines, the sea ebbcd and flowed and dashed its eternal waves upon the unchanged shore ; the sun rose and set, and the people went to work and returned to rest. Only to those who mourned and suffered, things wore a different, an unreal and shadowy aspect. They heard the noise of every-day existence, but it told them no more than the distant breakers or the drifting clouds with their fleeting shadows. To them everything seemed vague and distant, as though a deep abyss separated them from the rest of the world. In great sorrow one feels solitary and estranged from the friends who love one. And this mood is good and beneficent—a kind of twilight in which the sufferer does not see the whole depth of his misery—a slumber which partly numbs his faculty of feeling, and preserves him from madness and death—a solitude from which the truest friends should not attempt to draw him, especially as he can rarely disclose the whole of his trouble to them.

CHAPTER XXIII.

AT ROSE COTTAGE.

CRIES of "Gladys ! Gladys !" rang through the valley below the little rose-grown house that stood with wide-open doors and windows, basking in the pleasant sunshine. And Gladys appeared in the doorway, her black dress setting off the beauty of her form and making her look still more tall and slender, fair and rosy than before. The small train coming up the flowery meadow were also dressed in mourn-

ing, but they wore golden curls and laughing faces above their sable weeds, and their hearty merriment would have rejoiced a dying man and half consoled a mourner. Daisy came first, her hat slung to her arm and so full of flowers that they strewed the path the little feet were marking out on the grass; Freddy followed, leading Prinnie by the rein, on whose back, tied to a double saddle, the twins sat and were guarded by motherly Lizzie, who had to pick up their dolls every minute; for the twins had insisted on taking these dolls, and evidently thought it great fun to drop them on the ground. Minnie came flying across the meadow like a butterfly, and cried: "I shall be the first to kiss Gladys!" Then Llewellyn and Winnie emerged from the wood, discussing a caterpillar which Winnie was carrying with admiring caution, and whose metamorphoses Llewellyn was describing to her; it sounded like a fairy-tale.

"Hay," cried the twins, Lotty and Lily, joyously clapping their little hands. "Hay!"

"To roll in?" said Freddy, with a sly look at them.

Just then the only really serious member of the party came slowly from the wood, glanced at the meadow, yawned, and took a turn in the small brook which rippled on between flowers and grass, and over which the little girls had bounded like sylphs. This serious member was North, the Newfoundland dog. He thought such walks extremely superfluous, especially as there was no water to speak of in these parts; but he couldn't let such a lot of children go about alone and unguarded. For North counted Llewellyn among the children, as he was always with them and behaved just as unreasonably as they did, even pulling him—dignified old North—by his tail and ears when the twins did. Of course he walked up to the house as dripping wet as possi-

ble, and waited for the company to be locked in each other's embraces as the fitting moment to shake himself to his heart's content and sprinkle them all with the shower of glittering drops. Minnie laughed so much at this that she fell into the grass, which accident the twins took for a first signal to roll about in it.

"You are alone?" asked Llewellyn of Gladys.

"I expect my husband home every moment."

"Ha, ha, ha, ha!" she says "my husband!" roared the children. And Gladys blushed to the roots of her hair under the fire of Llewellyn's mischievous look.

Freddy declared proudly he could take care of Prinnie alone, and led the pony away. When he returned, he remarked dryly, that they had heard of the meadow being mown, and had come to work; namely, to make hay, and not to amuse themselves.

"Oh!" returned Gladys, with like gravity, "I see. Then I'll sit down on the bench here with Llewellyn, and you will work."

"Hum," muttered Freddy. "And who'll give us milk and strawberries?"

"I thought you had come to work?"

"Why, it's all set out already," cried Daisy, climbing up to the window, and the others climbed up after her, and every look was bent upon the interior.

"Hum, what nice milk, and butter, tea too, and such big strawberries! yes, and raspberries."

The twins burst out crying.

"Why, what's the matter with you?"

"We're too little," sobbed Lily.

"Much too little," cried Lotty.

"We can't see a bit," said Lily.

"Not the least little bit," agreed Lotty.

Of course they had to be lifted up to the window, and made big eyes at all the splendor within.

"They're very silly still," said Freddy apologetically.

"Children," cried Gladys, "if you'll help me, we'll carry all our dainties to the forest. I've got a nice table and benches under the trees, and things taste twice as good there. But if anybody drops anything, he'll get nothing but that to eat."

The twins would also carry something; so they got the spoons and the sugar. They kept putting in their fingers all the way, and then licking them afterward.

"If we throw it down, we can eat it all," said Lily.

"But then we don't get any strawberries," responded Lotty.

This wise provision saved the sugar from certain destruction. Llewellyn carried the big, fragrant dish of strawberries, and Gladys the milk. So the two most important objects were in good keeping.

It would need quite a particular pen to describe how nice things tasted at Gladys'. Even North was of opinion that it was a satisfactory kind of place, as he got bread and butter and was not teased, so long as hands and mouths were full.

Suddenly Gladys flushed crimson, and ran lightly toward the house.

"Martyn, most likely," remarked Freddy, without looking round, he was so busy.

Gladys returned radiant on Martyn's arm. He was greeted with cries of joy, and Lizzie hastened to fill his plate, for she had noticed that he looked very tired. He was not in the habit of saddening his home life with the sorrowful things he saw abroad; but Gladys knew the

shadow in his eyes, which she was permitted to banish with her sweet presence. She never asked questions till he began to tell her of his own accord, and then she often went with him, or after him, to help and comfort sufferers. The two were revered like angels in all the neighborhood.

"I have not much time," said Martyn; "the Vaughans have sent for me. Things are not going well with them of course."

"Poor people!" sighed Gladys.

At that moment a light gallop was heard, and lo—Prinnie had escaped, and was enjoying his freedom as heartily as if he were a young foal once more.

"Well, Freddy," said Llewellyn, "I shan't engage you as my private coachman yet."

North jumped barking around the pony, and made it wild. Freddy reddened violently and tried to catch it, but it only suffered him to come near, then shook its mane mischievously and ran off in a great circle over the meadow. Llewellyn quite enjoyed the pretty scene.

"If Freddy stood still, it would come," said Minnie.

"Well," said Gladys, "you catch it, it knows you so much better."

Freddy was called back. Minnie took some sugar in her hand, and called softly: "Prinnie." And the little animal ran after her across the whole meadow like a dog, and quietly took a slice of cake from the table, as if it thought it had a right to it. North was inclined to growl and manifest his indignation at such want of manners, but Freddy slapped his nose, and told him Prinnie was a guest and might do as he pleased. Gladys put out her hand to take his rein.

"Oh, no," said Winnie, "he isn't used to that. He always came upstairs to our room. He is accustomed to come and to go at will. He always played with us formerly. Come

here, Prinnie." And the little horse ran round the whole table and pushed his nose under his young mistress's arm, in search of bread and sugar.

North considered this impertinence rather shocking, and looked at Gladys to see what she thought of it; and when Prinnie actually took another slice of cake from the table, he gave a short bark to express his disgust. In unforgotten younger days he, North, had often been chastised by Morgan and Robert for feats very similar to those that were now admired and condoned in the pony. That was quite beyond his power of comprehension. Prinnie, however, took offense at North's educational scruples and kicked him. The children laughed till they nearly fell from their benches; then they raced about the meadow with the dog and pony, rolled themselves in the hay, built fortresses of it and defended them, tumbled each other down and covered the fallen with hay, and finally buried North in it, who submitted good-naturedly to their fun. The children's faces were glowing, the valley rang with their merry voices. They had built a throne in the shade, on which Llewellyn and Gladys seated themselves, when Martyn had taken a lingering and unwilling leave of so much gladness, to perform the hard duty of his calling. All at once the twins had vanished from the meadow.

"They're sure to be about some mischief," cried Gladys, springing to her feet and running back to the table.

There they sat, Lotty eating the butter with a spoon, and Lily the sugar.

"I'm North," said Lotty.

"And I'm Prinnie," said Lily.

"But you've not got *their* stomachs, you dreadful children. What will mamma say if you make yourselves ill!"

She hastily took the culprits back to the meadow.

"The children have made themselves excessively hot ; what are we to do with them now ?"

"We'll tell them a story," said Llewellyn, and they were quickly assembled around him and seated on the hay ; for a story was better, after all, than the finest game. Besides, they could always act it over in play afterward.

"Prinnie's history," began Llewellyn.

The children clapped their hands. "Prinnie's history," they cried joyfully ; "Prinnie's history ; how lovely that will be !"

"Quite at first," began Llewellyn, "Prinnie was a fairy horse, much tinier still than he is now ; his shoes were of gold, the nails in them of diamonds, his bridle studded with rubies, his saddle of ivory, and his tail so shining that people took it for a comet when he carried the fairies on their moss and rose-leaf cushions through the air."

Here the tale was interrupted by the arrival of Missy, who came to fetch the children home before the dew should fall. Llewellyn had intended to tell about Prinnie's metempsychoses, describing him consecutively in the characters of different famous horses, Bucephalus, Rosinante, the steed of Heliogabalus, of the Walkyre, of the Cid, and so on. But he was rather glad on the whole to be saved the trouble just then, and to promise the sequel of his story for the following day.

The evening had long closed in, but Gladys and Llewellyn were still sitting before the house. Gladys had ordered the tea and supper to be brought out to them, and a small lamp to be lit, and had grown very taciturn as the hours rolled by and Martyn did not return. Also Llewellyn listened when the clock struck midnight within, and asked the young wife if she would not go to rest after all.

"It would be the first time," she answered.

"Things must be very bad with the Vaughans, or he would have returned."

"I think I hear his step!" cried Gladys, starting up.

Martyn came toward them. He made no reply to Gladys' questions, but dropped wearily upon the bench, laid his hat on the table, crossed his arms on his knees, and sat leaning forward with contracted brows. Gladys placed a cup of tea before him, cut thin slices of bread, and served him quietly and neatly with her slender white hands. But Martyn did not look up.

"How is Edleen?" asked Llewellyn at length.

"She is dead."

"Dead!" exclaimed Gladys, her beautiful eyes filling with tears.

"It is better for her," said Llewellyn; "but what a sad end."

"Yes, what an end!" said Martyn hoarsely, leaning his arm on the table and stirring the hot tea without carrying it to his lips.

Llewellyn felt that speech would be a relief to him.

"As far as I know the circumstances, I think her death must have been bitter," he said.

"Bitter? It was horrible."

"But she could not want to live any more?" cried Gladys.

"She begged and prayed us to save her child; she implored us all, Vaughan, myself, sitting erect in her bed with her arms raised to heaven—horrible, horrible."

Martyn pressed his hand to his lips.

"But did nobody assure her that he would be spared?" asked Llewellyn.

"Kathleen had read somewhere he would most likely be hanged."

"And told her?" almost screamed Gladys.

"I fear so."

"That was revenge, fiendish revenge," whispered Llewellyn.

"For the poor woman cried incessantly : ' No, it is not true ; Kathleen has never been truthful, Kathleen has lied all the time, she lied because she loved Tom, and now she lies because she hates him. Kathleen, Kathleen ! ' She raised herself on her knees and swayed to and fro in her bed. ' Kathleen, do forgive me ! do forgive my poor son ! Save him ; tell them he has not been *so* wicked ! Harry, Harry ! Why did you say it was not your handwriting ? Why did you ? ' And then Vaughan tore his hair and said : ' I would give my whole fortune to be able to retract my declaration and save my wife ! I never suspected that Tom had forged those bills. ' And he hid his face in his hands, while the dying woman flung herself upon Owen's breast : ' Owen, dear Owen ! ' Help my child—withdraw the charge—say it has been a mistake—pray, dear Owen ! I will kiss your feet, if you will but help me. And you let poor Lewes pine in prison for my sake, you cruel men ! don't you see that it is I who lie in chains, I whose throat is wrung by the halter, I who am cast into hellish fire, in remorse and mortal agony ! Save, help, save—ah, why do you all forsake me in my misery ? Save my child, my only son, my idol, my everything ! save him, do. Ah, there you stand as cold as stone, as hard as steel ! And you are more heartless than the men, Kathleen ! Kathleen, you have loved him after all. You have sacrificed everything for him—you are ruined for him ! How can you hate where you have loved so well ? Kathleen, Martyn, help me ! Say my child is mad, my son is insane, Martyn ; pray, pray, say that ! Save him, my child, from the gallows ! Ah, pray, pray, pray ! ' It was dreadful, horrible. Hell is on earth, not beyond it."

Martyn's very lips were white.

"And one must have heard that through her trembling and the shivering-fits which made her teeth chatter and the very bed shake ; one must have felt the dying strength of her arms as she clung to us, and heard her burning eloquence, even when the words already rattled in her throat—horrible, oh, horrible !"

Martyn pressed both hands to his head. Gladys had turned deadly pale. Llewellyn bit his beard.

"I wish I had not become a physician," continued Martyn, after a pause ; "then I need never have witnessed such scenes."

Another long silence. He tried to take some tea, but pushed back the cup.

"This woman has suffered the eternal tortures of hell before she died. She only spoke of it in her dying hour. She also begged Vaughan's pardon for having placed so little confidence in him ; but he had always been perfect and faultless, she said, and had never understood her or her erring child."

"Poor man !" said Llewellyn.

"Yes, he *is* a poor man. Of what use have his riches, his manifold success, his grand schemes, his very integrity, been to him ? He has suffered his wife to pine to the grave because he could not overcome his hatred and jealousy, instead of pitying her sinning child."

"Dear Gladys," said Llewellyn, "you will always repose blind confidence in your husband, will you not ? You will confess everything to him, never conceal anything from him, never do anything without his knowledge and approval ? Promise me, my child."

"With all my heart," returned Gladys. "As it is, I look upon him as my guardian angel ; but for him I should have

fallen a victim to Tom's blandishments. And I was angry with my Martyn because I thought he had destroyed my happiness. Now, there passes no day without my feeling penitent about it."

Martyn laid his arm around his young wife, and looked deep into her eyes.

"I was long in disgrace," he said, smiling.

"Oh, Martyn, please don't! I'm so ashamed," said Gladys.

They sat silent for some time. At length Llewellyn demanded:

"But the proceedings against poor Lewes will be stopped, I suppose, if it is found that he took nothing for himself?"

"Old Owen has had several hard struggles with his master about it. Now he will prevail. Vaughan will withdraw his charge. Poor, honest old Owen had really meant to do right, but he has got himself into about the same difficulties as the bear did with the hermit. He tracked Tom like a bloodhound, and now he sees what he has done, he is quite disconsolate; especially as his master says he would have sacrificed anything to save his wife."

"Would he have done so?" asked Llewellyn.

"Why, yes; I think he would, if he had known everything. He was fond of her."

"Poor man!" said Gladys.

"They have promised Edleen to try and save her son, and I have as well as consented to hint at insanity. But I do not think him insane. It will be better for him not to go at large any more. There is little chance of his reforming."

"Who knows?" said Llewellyn.

"I fear he is lost, and poor Edleen died despairing."

"Should they not have brought her children to see her?" asked Gladys.

"That was out of the question. Consider how such a scene would affect Winnie's clear mind and Minnie's tender heart, and both the children's sensitive nerves. No, it would not have been any comfort to Edleen, and would have made a lasting impression of horror upon the little girls. I have strong nerves and am pretty familiar with death, but that surpassed even my strength."

"They did not love their mother," said Gladys.

"Because their mother did not love them. I often told her Winnie was a little genius, and she should not interfere with her enthusiasm; but she would not listen to me. She never understood her."

"And Kathleen?"

"Well, Kathleen is as fit for educating a child as a paper boat is for sailing."

"I only hope they won't take the children home now," remarked Gladys.

"Oh, no. Edleen spoke of that too, and bade us thank your mother and beg her to be severe with her children, lest they should grow undisciplined like Tom."

"And poor Vaughan said nothing? He adores his children."

"Vaughan only begged and prayed me to save his wife—as if I had not told him long ago that her disease was incurable. But people do not reason when they suffer. I wish I were no physician! What a profession ours is! That everlasting cry of distress: *Help us!* People generally cause their misery themselves, and then we are to help them—to help them! Ah, me, what a profession it is! Every day brings us fresh scenes of misery and despair, fresh struggles with folly and imprudence; we are alter-

nately overwhelmed with undeserved reproach and repugnant praise, not to speak of the ingratitude we reap. We have no Sunday, no holiday on which we can feel sure of rest or pleasure. The very night is not our own. There are times when I curse my profession, my blindness, and my clear-sightedness too. For I foresee every disaster which impends over happy families and which they cannot escape. And then one must listen to endless lamentations about trifling complaints, when one has but just witnessed real misery. Sometimes, too, one is not particularly happy one's self, and has to cope with a rebellious heart that will not submit to its fate—and who cares? Who has a moment's time to think of aught but himself? I made pretty experiences when I was sad, and even desponding, when I did not know that happiness and consolation were springing on my path, but thought myself wholly forsaken and condemned to everlasting solitude. In those days I fathomed the immense selfishness of mankind, and I can tell you it's as deep as the sea and as fierce as the Istwyth, swallowing up and swelling with everything that comes in its way. I! and I! and I! That what's the world consists of."

"On evenings like this one," said Llewellyn, "your beautiful profession appears hard and ungrateful to you, my friend. But there are other hours."

"Rarely."

"Ay; but those rare hours are worth other men's whole lives. Besides, you always have the privilege of studying Nature, great—holy Nature."

"Rather say, implacable Nature."

"Must she not be implacable in order to renew herself continuously?"

"But to what end does she renew herself? Only to produce the same misery, never to attain perfection."

"Nay, what do you want with perfection? I take delight in watching germination and decay, and even men's sins and passions, if truth must be told; where should I take my songs from, if I did not?"

"Ah, if my life were a song! If I did not doubt and despair of my art every day!"

"And I envy you for being appealed to by those who are in distress."

"You would not envy me long, if you saw and were brought into contact with unlovely things. I would often give a good deal to be forgotten."

"You share the fate of divine goodness—people forget you when they are happy."

"A divine attribute to which I am indifferent, so long as happiness dwells by my own hearth too. But when I was alone, I felt very lonely."

"Martyn, don't speak of that, it distresses me. I cannot forgive myself for not having tried to comfort you at the time."

"You don't know, Llewellyn, how coldly and haughtily this little queen here treated her poor bondman."

"Martyn—don't!"

"The grass under her feet was not trodden down so mercilessly as poor I was."

"Martyn, you are cruel."

"Revenge is not generous, but sweet. And when I hazarded a word, she would grow taller by a head; her lips would curve severely, and her eyes——"

"Martyn, Martyn, is that magnanimous? Have I not begged your pardon ever so humbly?"

"Oh, yes. Suddenly my queen bows her head, all but goes down on her knees before me, and begs pardon—and I don't know why to this day."

"I know it was a curious thing. As a matter of fact, Martyn, you owe your present happiness to Temorah."

"Temorah! Well, well, to be sure. A flattering discovery for a man who has ascribed his success to his personal attractions."

"It *is* humiliating," said Llewellyn.

"And that is how she came to propose to me."

"Martyn!"

"Ah, well—so you acted by Temorah's advice?"

"Yes—no—not as you mean," laughed Gladys.

"Heavenly messengers are not always winged," remarked Llewellyn.

"Oh, dear, no! She took me for Kathleen, and would have strangled me, perhaps, if I had not escaped in time."

"You?"

"Yes, me!"

"You never told me the story."

"Still waters are deep," said Llewellyn.

"Won't you tell us?" asked Martyn.

"Oh, not to-night. We have but just grown quiet and sleepy."

"We? I am not at all sleepy, nor is Llewellyn."

"I beg your pardon, I am very sleepy; and if I can't have a bed here, I'll lie down in the hay and stare at the stars all night," said Llewellyn.

"Do you call that sleeping?" asked Gladys.

"Oh, it's as good a way of sleeping as another."

"But we have a little room for a guest, dear Llewellyn."

"Yes," said Martyn, "we have a little room for quite a little guest."

"Martyn!"

"Well, what's the matter? I only meant that it was little for a great genius."

"Who knows what great genius will slumber into life within its walls," said Llewellyn.

"I shall think it an immense genius, of course," laughed Martyn.

And so they bade one another good-night.

But they did not go to rest at once. Martyn listened, with his wife's fair face on his breast, to the description of that meeting in the churchyard, which he had demanded almost imperiously, and when Gladys rose with excitement, he gently drew her into his arms again. And then she begged his pardon once more, and cried a little, too, because he had said such bitter things that evening, instead of feeling happy through her.

CHAPTER XXIV.

AMONG THE GRAVES.

KATHLEEN felt so friendless and forsaken, after the funeral, that she did not know what to do. Vaughan had locked himself up in his room and did not appear again that day. Owen had started for London with a paper signed by his master, authorizing him to stop the proceedings against Lewes. And Kathleen wandered aimlessly about the house in her long mourning robes, asking herself whither she should go. Out into the wide world?

The summer evening was calm and fair. She walked along the beach, where the waves stole up slowly and sleepily, with the gold of the sunset upon them. The light blue sky mirrored itself in the water, dyeing it a bright opal color, with faint stripes of red and green, that grew intenser as the sun sank lower, and looked like a red ball

against the hazy horizon. Kathleen stood still and gazed steadfastly at the red, cold disc, her eyes looking as sorrowful as an eagle's when his wing is broken and the distance no longer lures him, because his favorite element is powerless to bear him on. The red reflection was not intense enough to tint her pale face, whose stony stillness contrasted strangely with the restless motion of the waves at her feet.

"Nothing, nothing, nothing!" she thought, compressing her lips.

Her future looked as gray and dreary as the vast expanse of sky and water before her, which was slowly merging into a dense, monotonous leaden tint. All brightness had faded out of it; the whole universe seemed dead; only that eternal throbbing on the unfeeling shore would take no end. And weary of that restlessness, the lonely black form turned from it, and wandered listlessly away into the twilight, unconscious where she went. For there was no one she would or could go to. She knew of no threshold that she wished to cross, no hearth at which she would be welcome. There was but one place where no one would drive her away, no one greet her with reserve and hesitation, well as some of them were known to her—the churchyard. Thither she bent her steps. She came past the old church, which looked one mass of dark, uncanny shadows. But she was not afraid, not at all afraid now. There was the sound of a spade in the churchyard; she followed it, and presently saw the snow-white head of the ancient sexton rise to view, as he stood shoveling in a deep grave.

Kathleen silently watched him at his work until he took out his match-box and lit his lantern. Then he perceived the black figure beside him, shaded his eyes from the dazzling light, and said :

"Ah, it's you, miss ! A late hour for a lonely young lady."

"For whom is the grave ?" asked Kathleen, fain to make some remark.

"For Toby's wife. The woman, you know, whose husband Master Tom saved ; she never quite recovered from the shock of that accident, and now she's dead. It's a pity Master Tom got into such straits. They say the miners will all be called as witnesses when the assizes come on."

"And what kind of evidence will the miners give?"

"Hum, that's hard to say. They don't want to get him into trouble when he saved Toby and Will, but an oath is no trifling matter."

"Will everybody be summoned ?"

"Yes, they say everybody who knew him will have to give evidence."

"Indeed ! Must one obey the summons ?"

"To be sure one must ; else one is fetched by the police."

"And must one swear an oath ?"

"Of course one must. I had to bear evidence once, and I was in great distress about it. It concerned a woman who had murdered her child, and I was sworn a witness, because she had done it here in the churchyard. The poor thing was hanged in consequence of my speaking the truth."

Kathleen felt her pulses beat. The old man had resumed his work, but by and by he looked up again.

"Are you related to Master Tom ?"

"Yes," she replied, "I am related."

"Well, then, perhaps they'll let you off. Were you also related to Mrs. Vaughan ?"

"Yes."

"Poor lady," sighed the old man. "She's better in the

ground than above it. Well, good-night, and hurry home, miss, it's growing chilly. You're not afraid, I suppose?"

"No, I'm not afraid. Good-night."

Kathleen strayed on to Gwynne's grave. There she sat down, with her face in her hands, and did not stir until a quick step, restlessly and irresolutely advancing and retreating, made her lift her head in surprise. She recognized the stranger as Temorah, because she was rubbing her dress between her hands, as if she were washing it, and singing under her breath :

" They've led him to prison and forged him a chain,
His limbs in iron laying,
To hinder his heart from deceiving again,
And to hinder his feet from straying.

" For his eyes have been bright, and his lips have beguiled,
And the shame that he wrought has been burning ;
And now that he cannot acknowledge his child,
He never may think of returning.

" And the gallows is high, and I'm sick of my life,
And my honor has perished in sorrow ;
No longer a mother—and never a wife—
And my love to be hanged on the morrow ! "

Suddenly breaking off, Temorah came close to Kathleen and bent down to look into her eyes, so near that she almost touched her forehead. The next moment she started back with a terrible cry. Kathleen rose unsteadily to her feet, but the maniac had already flung herself upon her, and grasped her throat with both hands. Kathleen struggled to free herself with all her might, but Temorah was much stronger than she, and she felt a deadly faintness stealing over her, when a quick sharp blow on Temorah's arm made the latter loose her hold and fix a wondering look upon the new face before her.

"Are you Death?" she asked calmly, as though she had never dreamt of strangling Kathleen.

"I am Ulla, the witch, and if thou dost not get thee gone at once, I shall take all thy linen from thee and never let thee wash again. Away, hie thee to the river."

Kathleen was destined to undergo one unwelcome interview after the other. "I wish she had killed me," she thought, while Ulla drove Temorah from the churchyard with outstretched arm, imitating the screech of an owl to scare her away completely. Then she returned to Kathleen.

"Now," she said, "we two can commune together undisturbed."

"Commune?" repeated Kathleen. "Have I called you, witch?"

"Is that all the thanks thou wilt give me for saving thy life?"

"Do you want me to thank you for that? I hold my life very cheap."

"I never saw aught so clumsy as thy hands. Such work never prospers one. All wrong, all wrong. I know all, and am fain to laugh at thy folly."

"Your counsel has brought me so far."

"My counsel? Did I tell thee to give *Tom* the love-potion? Did I, when so much better a suitor was at hand? Now thy fortune is marred and broken; no husband, no hearth, and no home, fair maid."

"I know that already; you need not tell me."

"Ay, but thou dost not realize it sufficiently; else hadst thou not come hither, but to me. I have long expected thee."

"Me? What do you want with me?"

"I want thee to grow like myself."

Kathleen retreated a step. Ulla laughed.

"No, not so ugly as I am, my child; real witches are very beautiful, for they have need of beauty. I am beautiful when I will and need it, most beautiful; and thou shalt rejoice in thy beauty if thou wilt hearken to me."

"I do not care about beauty or anything else."

"But thou wouldst eat and drink?"

Kathleen was silent.

"Ay, my child, eat and drink; and let me tell thee, it is better to extort one's food from people than to beg it. One laughs at them and takes it; one grows rich and happy; very happy and powerful, and sways the whole world. Thou art born to be a sorceress, to bewitch people; why not use thy power? Thou canst attain to whatever thy heart desires; and gain unheard of love, and reign over a host of vassals. Why wouldst thou hesitate?"

"And why are you ragged and wasted? Where is your empire, your lover, your host of vassals?"

"I will show thee things that shall cause thee to believe in my power."

"But how have you gained that power?"

"That will I teach thee. Thou must become one with Nature, my child, and renew thyself independently, as she does. For me, I see nowhere dust or ashes; the very dust is replete with life."

"I will believe what I see."

"So be it. *See!*" cried Ulla suddenly, with a pealing voice, laying her fingers on Kathleen's eyes, and beginning to murmur strange, incoherent words over her.

When the girl opened her eyes again, Ulla was sitting on a tall tombstone, and stretching out her emaciated arms.

And faintly, faintly, the graves began to stir, as if the turf upon them were surging up in tiny waves: then the move-

ment grew stronger, the earth heaved, and trembled, and fell asunder, and shadowy forms and faces emerged from it, gray, transparent, immaterial. They all bore small lamps in their hands, and moved their lips, but their voices were inaudible. They met, and passed one another, and held up their lamps to look in each other's faces. More and more dead arose, until at last every grave stood tenantless ; and other forms came flying through the air on transparent steeds. Cloud-like mountains and causeways formed above the plain, and coaches whirled along them, drawn by fleet horses and attended by outriders and torch-bearers, all of them shadowy and transparent. Their inmates alighted and mingled with the crowd.

Some of the phantoms curiously approached Kathleen, and gazed at her by the light of their lamps. Una's grave had also unclosed, and Gwynne's and Edleen's, and a child with a radiant face came toward Kathleen—oh, horror ! it was Tem-orah's. By its side floated a faint mist, a mere outline, a dim fancy, that seemed to cling to her for an instant (" This might have been but for the Green Lake") Kathleen shivered. Toby's wife passed by her, wringing her hand and looking back with yearning eyes toward the home she had left. Edleen fell down at Kathleen's feet, and moved her lips again and again, but could not form an audible word. Gwynne glided calmly through the throng, gazing at Una's happy, white and radiant face. Presently the dead took their hearts out of their breasts, held them to their lamps till they burned, and seemed to view the beautiful flames with delight. And then they showed those burning hearts to Kathleen, and a smile flitted over their gray faces, that were dissolving and melting into air every moment. And ever new hosts came and went, but without a sound—not even a step or the rustling of a gown was heard. Only Edleen succeeded

in breathing : "Tom—save !" close to Kathleen's ear and then her form dissolved in a few instants, all but her hand with the burning heart in it, which cast a bluish luster around.

The phantoms seemed anxious to commune with each other, but unable to excite the faintest interest in each other's minds. They also strove to speak to Kathleen, but she could not understand them. Gwynne's once so eloquent lips moved in vain ; Kathleen could not catch his words, much as she strained her ears to listen. She heard nothing but a low sigh among the grass, and again that misty influence clung to her for a second, and drifted away as before.

Una put her burning heart back in its place, and it flamed on and irradiated all her form and her clear, smiling face.

And in the midst of all these phantoms Ulla sat still and motionless. The small lamps illumined her head from time to time, showing it more decayed and skull-like than those of the dead. She sat on her marble throne with her arms crossed on her bosom, watching the moving shadows through all that night.

Kathleen did not know whether she had been waking or, dreaming, when a broad, blood-red dawn steeped the eastern sides of the church and tombstones in ruddy radiance. Ulla was gone, and the old sexton stood before her.

"What?" said he. "Been sleeping among the graves, miss? Haven't you seen anything uncanny then?"

"Yes, I have," murmured Kathleen vaguely. "Yes, I have seen a great deal, a great deal. Where's Ulla?"

"Who?"

"Never mind ; I hardly know what I am saying."

"Do you mean Ulla, the witch? Has she been here again?"

"I don't know. Maybe she has," said Kathleen, raising herself with some difficulty and walking away as fast as her feet would carry her. She had meant to go to Ulla and give herself up to her, body and soul. But the coming of the sexton had dispelled the nightly charm, and now the sun was rising in its glory. She felt that she could not bury herself alive, that some kind of existence and *possibility* of existence must still lie before her. Her body shrank from the castigation which Ulla's emaciated appearance led her to suspect, and her beauty rebelled against the tyranny of ugliness.

She went home, and knocked gently at Vaughan's door. He had evidently not been in bed, and his lamp was burning still, in spite of the sunshine out-of-doors.

"I wished to bid you good-by," began Kathleen.

"Good-by? No, that you shall not. Edleen was with me last night, and bade me keep you near me. And indeed, child, I cannot do without you. I am alone. For I do not mean the children to live under my ill-starred roof again; I shall leave them where they are. So we two will try to patch our ruined lives up somehow, shan't we, Kathleen? We shan't be in each other's way, and can speak of her sometimes."

His voice broke as he concluded.

Kathleen was silent, trifling with the crape on her dress.

"And can you bear to see me?" she asked at last. "Would it not be better for you if I were removed from your sight and remembrance?"

"I have no intention to forget—it is impossible."

"Thank you," said Kathleen briefly. "Thank you, I shall stay."

Vaughan sank back in his chair, as if his strength were utterly exhausted, and Kathleen went up the old staircase,

into the old room, and stood there a long time before she could make up her mind to take off her hat and smooth her untidy hair. She considered whether she should go to bed, or take a bath and then a walk to the shore, or whether—whether—she really did not know; she was standing irresolute in the middle of the room, when a well-known heavy tread resounded on the stairs, succeeded by a trot along the passage and a snort at the door. It was Prinnie paying her a visit, after a long interval. She flung her arms around the pony's neck and wept aloud.

"You come to me, poor little creature!" she sobbed.

She cried herself calm upon the pony's neck, and then she went about the whole room, looking for a bit of sugar; she only found some forgotten biscuit, dry and hard as stone; but still it was something, and would serve to show Prinnie that his visits were welcome here.

"Prinnie, Prinnie! how did you come to think of me all at once? Poor little creature, I'm not too bad for you! You have no soul, Prinnie, or you would have kept away. For there isn't a soul that would come near me, Prinnie."

Her bitter feeling of forsakenness had hardly been mitigated by Vaughan's offer; for that was not much more than if one of the dead last night had offered her a grave to live in.

Kathleen went down to luncheon carefully dressed, but Mr. Vaughan sent a polite message, begging to be excused. She took a few morsels alone, and then seated herself in a window, her hands idly folded on her lap. The summer was nearly spent, and now the last thunderstorm of the season, which that morning's glowing dawn had presaged, broke loose with crashing thunder and pouring rain. Kathleen thought of that long past tempestuous night, when Tom had crossed the river and she had looked after

him with hot eyes. How much she had gone through since then! A heavy sorrow crept over her heart, and clung to it for many weeks after.

She had to take many a meal by herself before Vaughan made up his mind to come to table again. And then he sat opposite to her, bent and taciturn, and Kathleen vainly racked her brain for some topic of conversation. Those phantoms in the churchyard could not have met in more shadowy conviviality, she thought, remembering her dream and smiling, now she had had time for mature consideration, that Ulla should have thought her so childishly superstitious as to believe in her power to raise the dead from their graves, when she had simply closed her eyes and lulled her to sleep. No, Kathleen was not qualified to become a sorceress. She lacked the faith which makes saints and fanatics. She believed in nothing save her own beauty, which gave her pleasure even now. It amused her to see her face in the mirror, to dress her hair in various ways, to watch the languid motion of her long lashes.

A superficial nature is not ennobled by the bitterest experience. It cannot change its essence. As time went on, Kathleen came to tell herself that it was quite convenient for Vaughan to have a good housekeeper, and that it had been perfectly natural and proper not to turn her out of his house, when he was so rich.

If there had only been anything palpable between the tediousness of each hour and the painful excitement of the approaching assizes, anything to break the heavy gray monotony of her memories.

The only one who retained his full energy and courage in that ill-starred household was old Owen. He entered Lewes's cell with a firm step and a resolute countenance. Lewes had grown thin and hollow-eyed, and the thick

blue veins on his forehead seemed to testify to an endless torture of thought.

"Lewes, my friend, you are free!" cried Owen.

Lewes staggered to his feet and leant against the table for support.

"Free?" he whispered.

"Yes, free—free! And you will return to your old desk and go on working with me. The charge has been withdrawn, and you are my old Lewes again."

The other slowly shook his head.

"I am willing to earn my bread quietly and humbly with you as your meanest clerk; but, no safe-key, no money transaction must ever be trusted to these hands again. Let me work in some obscure corner, where I am unperceived and can see her, when she drives past the office windows."

"See whom?"

"The only woman I care for on earth."

"Dear Lewes, you will not see her again."

"Edleen?"

"Yes, her sufferings are over."

Lewes sank down on his bench, struggling for breath. Owen thought he would not survive that hour. But his strong constitution resisted the spasms that made his lips turn blue and his hands contract. As soon as he was able to speak, he asked how she had died. Owen gave the details as dryly and undramatically as possible, and finally remarked that any one who had loved her must rejoice at her release, as there was little hope of saving Tom from the halter.

Lewes kept his disconsolate thoughts to himself. Where was the use of hurting the old man with reproaches? He had acted as honor and conscience had prompted him, in holy wrath, and if he had accelerated the unhappy Edleen's

death and broken Vaughan's heart, there was no help for it now. Strictly honest and strictly truthful people often do great harm and cause much misery, because they see things solely from one point of view, and fancy themselves stronger than they are, wiser than their lack of judgment permits, better than their erring fellow-creatures, who may have originally possessed nobler natures than they and consequently been exposed to greater temptation.

Lewes had thought a good deal during those long months, and in the pale, gray shadow of the prison walls it seemed so simple to him to go to Vaughan and say: "Give the lad a few thousands of pounds and ship him off to Australia."

Ay, things seem very simple, when passion is subdued, when grief has bowed the proud and unrelenting to the dust, when the gray monotony of every-day life has sobered the fanciful. Lewes could not understand why he had not done that and prevented all this present misery. He sat there in silence, and Owen stood before him, impatient to take him away, to restore him to honor and liberty. But Lewes was in no hurry; he shrank from the noisy streets, from familiar faces, from his own shadow, from his return to the office.

And yet he ought to have felt deeply grateful for being received into it again. He never suspected what it cost Vaughan to employ him now, when he was pondering day and night as to what relations might have existed between his wife and Lewes. His practical mind could not take in the possibility of a man's becoming a criminal for nothing, without a word of encouragement or a look of loving gratitude, barely for the sake of two beautiful eyes. But he was too proud to try and obtain certainty by uttering the doubt to any one, which was gnawing at his heart and growing more palpable the longer a space of time separated him from the

woman he adored, the woman in whose eyes he would soon have read the truth, that she was utterly inaccessible to any passion but her love for Tom.

And so the proud, unhappy man went on bearing his racking pain. He never came to London, and rarely left his house at all. With regard to business he was as clear-headed and bold as before, and his old passion for enterprise soon possessed him so completely that he seemed indifferent to all but figures. Kathleen's presence was rather agreeable to him than otherwise. The house was well kept. She always looked elegant and well-dressed, and her thoughts or feelings were a matter of perfect indifference to him. He shielded her from being summoned to give evidence against Tom, by pleading her near relationship to the defendant. When the trial came on, he did his utmost to save his stepson, and his exertions were so far successful that the young man was sentenced to penal servitude for life, and thus belonged to the dead without passing through the hangman's hands. Vaughan thought Edleen would rest in peace now, and not appear to him night after night with clasped hands and looks of despair.

CHAPTER XXV.

HOW IT CAME TO PASS.

TIME stole on. The dead were dust. The living waxed older. The children grew up and developed into the fair human flowers they were destined to be.

One day Vaughan entered Kathleen's room. "I have a peculiar proposal to make to you," he began. His tone was quiet and businesslike. "I intend to travel a while on the Continent, and as I do not wish to leave you here quite

alone, I should like to pass through the ceremony of marrying you, and to take you with me."

"Marry *me*?" Kathleen flushed crimson and turned very pale again.

"Our friendly relations toward each other shall remain exactly what they have been hitherto. But I shall give you an honest name, a fine position in society, and a rich inheritance. As a wealthy widow, you will have the world at your feet. My children are liberally provided for, and when they marry they will of course have all their mother's ornaments into the bargain."

"Their mother's ornaments!" repeated Kathleen, with a joyless laugh. "There isn't one real stone left among them. Don't you know we sold them all? That was the beginning!"

Vaughan stood with a heavy frown gathering on his brows, and made no reply.

"However," pursued Kathleen, "I accept your proposal on condition that I may order as many dresses as I like, stay in London as long as I please, and travel when the humor takes me."

"I'm not in the habit of doing things by halves," returned Vaughan dryly.

And so they were made man and wife, and took a beautiful wedding-trip through France and Italy, and Kathleen returned just at the right time to shine in her new, real jewelry and tasteful attire, as the most elegant of London ladies, the beauty of the season. Vaughan was unanimously congratulated on having won this charming creature, who lent his name and wealth a brighter luster. Her drawing-rooms were the finest, her table the choicest; her guests belonged to the best society; and, when she glided through some crowded ball-room, with her ivory complexion, her

raven hair and brows and lashes, and that strange, sudden glance of her bewitching blue eyes, many a young man's heart beat faster, and many a woman felt the pangs of un-availing envy. She looked the incarnation of passion, and was, nevertheless, as cold as marble. People hinted at strange, romantic passages in her past life, but their powers of invention never came near the truth. Mrs. Vaughan was a favorite topic in society, a mark for every opera-glass, the belle of every ball, the most daring of horse-women.

"I advise you," said Vaughan composedly, "to keep your heart in check till after my death. I have no wish to interfere with your feelings so long as you take care of your reputation. But you will have better chances of making a brilliant match by and by, if you are wholly disengaged."

"One never gets burnt more than once, Vaughan. The first time one does not know what one is about, but afterward it is easy to be on one's guard. A thorough burning makes one prudent for all the rest of one's life."

Vaughan had the name of a terribly jealous husband.

Rose Cottage had become a very pleasant home. Blooming children skipped across its threshold, and Martyn was falling more deeply in love every day, while Gladys felt supremely happy and was as beautiful as ever.

At the vicarage all was bustle and commotion. Robert was expected home after an absence of several years; Morgan was to return to meet him, and Ned had holidays. And so the family were to be completely reunited again for the first time since the father's death. Garlands were being wound, choruses practiced and Chinese lamps prepared to illuminate the garden in the evening. Missy superintended the preparations from her easy-chair, to which the gout confined her. Daisy and Winnie were standing on high

ladders to hand the garlands to Freddy, as he towered above them. The twins brought in big baskets full of roses which they had cut off Gladys' bushes. Lizzie was busy in the kitchen and cellar, and ran in lightly now and then to consult her mother. Just then North rose very stiffly and painfully, and wagged his tail as assiduously as he could to welcome Llewellyn, who seemed to remain unchanged and youthful, and had been bidden to the cheerful feast.

"Why, where is Winnie?" he asked, as he exchanged friendly greetings with the rest.

"Winnie? Ah, to be sure, where's Winnie? She was here till a few minutes ago."

Where was Winnie? She had hidden herself, like the little coward she was, because the time for Morgan's arrival had come, and Morgan was not to see how her heart fluttered at his approach, since *he* had no heart for her. Was he not more cold and reserved every time he visited his old home? And now he had been away for nearly two years, two long years, in which he had not even sent her a message. Her heart had always belonged to him; she hardly knew when she had begun to love him. He had always been perfection itself, a man who had no faults like other people, who was always serious, and had understood her when nobody had. For when the news of her father's second marriage had reached her from London, the passionate child had run out and dashed her head against a tree in a frenzy of pain. Then she had felt something soft between herself and the tree, and when she opened her eyes she saw Morgan, of whose presence she had been ignorant, who had interposed his hand between her forehead and the bark of the tree, and now withdrew it, cut and bleeding.

"But, Winnie," he said, so reproachfully that she stood before him drooping her head and waiting for him to go on. As he said nothing, however, she raised her eyes and met his gaze. Was it that look of his, which she could never forget again? It had sunk deep, deep into her heart.

"I—I—I can't bear it, Morgan," she stammered at last, as he still kept silence. He did not reply nor look away from her.

"No, Morgan, please don't, don't look at me like that; turn your eyes away from me, Morgan."

"Was that my father's good little daughter?" he said at length.

"But, Morgan, he never thought such a thing could happen."

"What thing could happen?"

"That Kathleen, Kathleen—should become my—mother. Morgan, he never dreamt of such a thing."

"But she will not be your mother, child."

"She will take me away from here, and tell falsehoods again, and get me into trouble with papa, and—and—whip me again, for she detests me. And she'll take my harp away again, and drive me away from the piano—and—and——"

Morgan seated himself on the bench before which he had once lain among the leaves at Una's feet, with Martyn standing near them. He laid his arm around Winnie, pushed the hair from her aching forehead, and said:

"My poor little Winnie, not one of all these dreadful things will happen. How will you ever learn to bear a misfortune if you make it so much worse in your own estimation by idle and probably groundless apprehensions?"

"Morgan, you were also in despair at one time, though you never told me why."

"Why I was in despair? Some time, after many years, I will tell you. But, Winnie, I never tried to knock my brains out."

"Well, you're a man."

"That makes little difference with regard to suffering. On the contrary, I think women have more fortitude than men."

"Your mother, Morgan!"

"Ay, my saintly mother. Can't you be like her?"

"I'm not really her child, you know. I wish I were, just a little bit, Morgan."

"Does she not love you already like a child of her own?"

And there that look was again, and Winnie wondered how deep a ray of sunshine went when it fell upon the sea; she suddenly put that question.

"It depends on the position of the sun," said Morgan, surprised and at a loss to understand the child, who was looking fixedly at him. He saw that she pondered on his reply. What could she have meant?

Ah, yes, what had she meant? To what had the young soul unfolded under his gaze? He knew it not, nor did she. She only knew that he was perfect and strong, and a hero, her conscience and her better self to her. But she did not know a collective name for all these attributes, not even long after, on that day when she had hid herself at his approach.

She heard the carriage drive up, she heard all the greetings, and her cheeks burned. Should she go down now? Should she meet him on the stairs? Yes, perhaps on the stairs. But as she emerged from her room, she saw him come along the passage, leaning on his mother's arm.

"Is that Winnie?" he asked hesitatingly and surprised.

"Yes, she has grown, has she not?"

A slender, cold hand lay in his for a moment and was quickly withdrawn, a profound look flashed across his face, and then she fled like a gazelle along the passage and down the stairs. He only saw the brown curls float on the air and brighten with the sudden reflection of a sunbeam; then she was gone.

An hour later Robert arrived, sinewy and sunburnt, southern and foreign looking. He did not recognize anybody, and nobody recognized him. They found the change so great that they grew quite silent, until Gladys burst into a ringing laugh and held her children up to him.

"Lotty and Lily," said he.

"Here are Lotty and Lily," cried the twins, who had grown taller than Daisy and Winnie had been.

When he saw Winnie, he stood perfectly aghast.

"Why—you're a grown-up young lady," he stammered. •
"What's become of little Winnie, whose hair I used to pull?"

"She's here—pull away," said Winnie unabashed, and laughingly held out her long curls to him.

Morgan was surprised to see her anything but shy with his brother, while Robert seemed to have lost his tongue since he had set eyes on her. She was very like her mother, with her gray eyes and golden-brown hair, her delicate figure and slender hands and feet. Her appearance formed a striking contrast to the more substantial beauty and stronger statures of Daisy and Lizzie.

There was a regular tumult in the dear old drawing-room which had witnessed all their joys and all their griefs, and when they were about to grow melancholy with the very sweetness of their memories, Ned arrived, raising their mirth

to its highest pitch with his imperturbability and his dry jokes. Finally Martyn came rushing in. What shaking of hands, and rejoicing, and questioning, and simultaneous talking there was! They made such a din that North began to bark, by way of reminding them of his presence. Missy smiled in spite of her pains, happy to see her whole flock together once more, probably for the last time before her faithful heart should stand still and her kindly voice be hushed.

"Missy, dear Missy," said Minnie, laying her face against her old friend's, for those poor hands of hers were too sensitive to bear touching. "Now you are glad, aren't you? I mean to become like you, Missy; I'll never marry, and only belong to other people's children, and love them, as dearly as you have done, Missy."

Winnie lived quite alone in a little room at the top of the house. She had begged hard to have it to herself, and had hung it in a most original fashion with all sorts of gay-colored tapestry. Her window looked straight into the tree-tops and birds' nests, and sometimes her harp and deep, soft voice were heard there at night in untiring improvisation. This inheritance from her mother had thriven wonderfully under Llewellyn's fostering hand; Missy often forgot her gout when Winnie sang. That night Winnie's singing also floated out across the tree-tops for ever so long. She was not aware that a slumberless watcher was listening to it below, sitting motionless on the terrace lest he should betray his presence.

"She was so shy with me," thought Morgan. "Perhaps she does not care for me any more. Perhaps she likes Robert. If she would only say so, I would not stand in his way."

He had not known that she occupied that little room, and

when he had first heard the harp, he had fancied it was Llewellyn, but not for long, for her voice soon mingled with the thrilling of the chords :

“ They all await the thing they love,
With mute and wistful yearning !
The shore awaits the rising tide,
The night the day's returning.

“ The plant awaits the sparkling dew,
The sky its starlight tender,
The sea its tempests, and the wood
Its golden autumn splendor.

“ The earth awaits the fruitful rain ;
The vine-flowers bend and quiver
With longing for the ripening sun ;
The brook would join the river.

“ And when the waves have reached the shore,
They break upon it dying ;
And at the day's serene approach,
The night is ever flying.

“ The dewdrop finds a withered plant ;
The sky is gray and dreary ;
The golden leaves must sink to dust ;
The storm-tossed sea grows weary.

“ The earth is flooded with the rain ;
The plundered vineyards shiver ;
The rippling brook is borne away,
And scattered in the river.

“ They all await the thing they love,
The bliss they dream of gaining—
And when at last it comes to them,
It is not worth attaining ! ”

“ *Not worth attaining* ”—was that the fear which had influenced her manner to him to-day ? Did she doubt the

possibility of happiness with him? He questioned himself whether, after having waited for her growing up all these years, he loved her as dearly as he had loved Kathleen, and he was too honest and candid not to own to himself that he had thrown away all his first delight in love, that he had wasted the profoundest passion of his heart, and that his feeling for Winnie would never be so intense and engrossing as his first love had been. He had not met Kathleen again. She was almost always away in London, or on the Continent, or staying at country houses. In Wales she was hardly ever spoken of. Morgan himself thought, that evening, that he had forgotten her, and might aspire with a quiet conscience to the fair flower which was willing to bloom for him—unless, indeed, he had been mistaken, and his brother had been the beloved lover.

A few days later he resolved to consult his mother, as he could not comprehend Winnie. Mrs. Gwynne smiled archly and advised him not to be too bashful.

“But Robert?”

“Well, Robert is very much charmed, but he will get over it. Take heart, and do not suffer that which is yours to be taken from you.”

But Morgan still hesitated. He could not forget the sad mockery of his first wooing, and had no confidence in his success.

The days passed in sunny glory and endless delight. The inmates of the vicarage were in high spirits, and sometimes Winnie took part in the fun, unreservedly merry, mischievous, and witty for the time being, but presently retiring into herself again, like gentians closing at sunset.

Llewellyn watched her secretly and with deep enjoyment.

One morning, after breakfast, the whole family were assembled in the drawing-room, jesting, laughing, and mak-

ing plans for the day. Winnie had sat a long while at Missy's feet. Now she rose and passed quietly through the great bow-window to the terrace, and thence to the big avenue that had seen so much love, glad and sorrowful, in its day. Winnie knew nothing of those past passions. She only knew that Morgan was cold and always withdrew when Robert courted her. She pulled up the grass-blades and bit off their tender ends, wondering what Morgan could mean! She wanted him to be as he had been in the old time, quite the same; no, not quite, different somehow—she did not exactly know what she wanted herself, she felt so dizzy with the tumult of her young heart.

Meanwhile Robert went up to Morgan, who had first taken a few steps after Winnie, and then stopped irresolutely in the window.

"Hark ye, Morgan, old fellow, I didn't think you were such a milksop. If you don't go after her, I shall; for I'm as mad about her as a March hare."

"Am I to leave her to you, Robert?"

"Not unless she throws you over. You had better try *your* luck first. You see I'm candid with you."

"You are a good fellow and I am a fool."

"No, you got hurt once, and you can't forget it. But that was different, Morgan."

"She has grown so shy."

"Ah, I wish she were shy with me! I'd have kissed her long ago. You've got no experience, old fellow."

Morgan shook his finger at his brother.

"Oh, well, you know, you're a saint and I'm a sailor," the latter said, reddening. "Really, Morgan, I'd like to help you, but I'm afraid I might forget and speak for myself."

Morgan looked after the white dress glistening among the avenue trees.

"She's like the does and hares, and every other creature in air and water," said Robert. "She calls and flies, calls and flies, and doesn't know herself how coquettish she is; she goes after you, and you don't see it because she slips away as soon as you turn your head. I watched her yesterday. You stepped out on the terrace, and she rose without knowing what she was about, to go after you, and when I asked her, 'Whither so fast?' she grew sadly confused, and had to reflect some moments before she explained that she wanted to get Missy her shawl. But Missy had one already. How am I to pay my addresses to her after that? I must be blind to think of such a thing. She has often followed you, and you haven't seen it. Morgan, she's a poem, a fairy-tale personified. I've seen plenty of women on this checkered globe, but there's a charm about Winnie—— Look how she's biting the grass-blades, she'll cry directly, she's much too innocent to hide her feelings. She doesn't even know yet that she's in love with you. Just try her by saying you must be off to-morrow, and see what'll happen. How slow you are, Morgan! Don't wait till her eyes open of themselves, you'll lose the first and subtlest sweetness of it all. Bah, must one *teach* you how to make love? Doesn't a fellow know that kind of thing by instinct?"

Morgan sighed and walked out toward the avenue. Robert beckoned Llewellyn to the window, and they waited together to see the result. But just as Morgan came up with Winnie, some big trees hid them from view, and the two inquisitive watchers had to wait till they should catch sight of them again. However, they were richly rewarded for their patience. As the young couple passed the next opening between the trees, a most extraordinary thing occurred: Winnie sank upon her knees for an instant, and then sprang up like a fawn and was bounding away, when

Morgan caught her to his heart and kissed her as if he could never let her go again. And she did not make the slightest resistance, but received his kiss as a flower receives a first rain-drop. Llewellyn and Robert looked smilingly at each other, and Robert said :

"I'd have liked that kiss, I'd really have liked it, and it was rather good-natured in me not to go in for it."

"A fast young sailor finds plenty of rare flowers to cheer his way," said Llewellyn ; "a lonely country minister has fewer chances."

"I say, those two seem in no hurry to return !"

"Why should they return ? As I know Winnie, Morgan will need all his powers of persuasion to bring her in here."

Thanks to their persevering watchfulness, they also witnessed the trouble it cost Morgan to lead his coy, blushing, shamefaced betrothed back to the room and into the arms of her friends. Winnie was quite subdued, and laughed bashfully, dropping on the floor and hiding herself in Missy's lap. And when Ned and Daisy pulled her away with united efforts, she hid behind Mrs. Gwynne and a sofa-cushion.

"Well done, Morgan !" said Robert afterward. "Seems to me you were mighty quick about it."

"Ah, I was quite surprised myself. *Can* you understand it, Robert ? It really seems she loves me."

"Why, yes ; it *is* startling news ; but I think she does, myself."

"But, Robert—*me* !"

"Why, do you think yourself a monster, old fellow ?"

"Well, no, I suppose not. But it seems she has loved me this long time."

"I thought I had hinted as much to you."

"But she was such a child."

"Child indeed ! She was a girl, Morgan. They pretend

to be children and are sirens from their cradles ; they flirt before they can speak, and love before they can think. And you have kept the flame pretty well alive, furnishing oil for it, without a suspicion of the truth, of course."

"I dare say I am awfully obtuse."

"Dear old Morgan, how I used to thrash you ! I wish I might do so now ! It would relieve my feeling !"

"Do so, then !"

"No, it wouldn't be fit, now you're a minister and an accepted lover to boot. What would *she* say, if she saw me thrash her lord and master, her idol, her ideal ?"

"Ah, Robert, I am so terribly far from being an ideal !"

"Don't tell her so ; stick to the pedestal she has placed you on ; you'll both be the better for it."

"But that would not be honest."

"Oh, yes, it would ; quite honest enough, and very useful into the bargain."

"But if she discovers the truth ?"

"She won't ; not before the end of the honeymoon. Only try and keep up to the mark till then."

"Robert, Robert ! I wish I had your light heart !"

"Don't you though ? If I could only thrash you, Morgan, it would make you so much happier."

"I tell you again, do !"

And all of a sudden the brothers were seen wrestling with each other in the meadow like boys, Robert's flexible, catlike agility compensating for Morgan's broader build and greater strength ; but after giving his brother a good deal of trouble, the sailor magnanimously suffered himself to be vanquished because he had caught a glimpse of Winnie's frightened face.

The small scene produced the desired effect ; Morgan grew confident, Winnie tractable, the children boisterous,

and Mrs. Gwynne cheerful. Llewellyn called Robert a great psychologist and adept in the art of managing human nature.

"A pity I can't bestow some of it on my brother ; he wants it more than I do."

How bravely Robert was trampling on his own heart all this time, none guessed but his mother, and she knew without her son's having betrayed himself by a single word or look. She thought of her dearest one ; how his strong spirit and shining example lived on in his children so long after he had left them himself.

"My children love one another," she said.

The minstrel looked at them : "Yes, they do, with a strong, self-sacrificing affection."

Mrs. Gwynne followed the minstrel's look, which was fixed approvingly on Robert ; she saw that he, too, had understood her son and appreciated his goodness, and her motherly heart beat high with glad excitement and anxious pride.

Some days later the general rejoicing was interrupted by a piece of news which perturbed them all for a few hours, as though there were thunder in the air. Vaughan wrote, he and Kathleen would arrive in about a fortnight and take their daughters home for the time before the wedding.

Winnie flung herself at Mrs. Gwynne's feet and implored her to prevent their taking her away. Minnie also cried, though she had completely forgotten her former home. Mrs. Gwynne feared Kathleen, and held many a long and anxious consultation with Missy and Llewellyn about Morgan and Winnie. Morgan himself was deeply agitated, and trembled at the thought of that meeting and of Winnie's eyes, which would quickly discover his ancient feelings, if he were not careful. However, he thought himself so thoroughly cured, and so thoroughly in love with his charm-

ing betrothed, that all the witches and sirens in the world could not harm him. The most anxious of all was Martyn, though he never said a word. He would not let Gladys suspect that he had not forgotten Una, but he knew well how tenacious a feeling first love is, and he wished Kathleen at the antipodes.

Gladys was perfectly unconcerned. She saw that her dear husband was all her own, and she had never yet thought of jealously banishing Una's picture. Without being very selfish, she was engrossed by her happiness, and occupied a somewhat limited point of view with regard to other people's feelings. Had she been able to fathom her Martyn's heart and found Una's image clinging to its inmost recesses, she would have felt sadly hurt and troubled, and would probably have tortured herself with useless repinings. For reasons like this, loving delicacy and dignified silence should be observed in the most happy and tender relations of life. No one is the better for knowing or telling everything. There are burdens which every one must bear himself, and a man should never be considered false or insincere if he presents only the select and satisfactory outcome of his mental fermentation to other people's view. His best is generally just good enough for his fellow-creatures. So thought Martyn, and went on his rounds with a heavy heart, wishing Kathleen a solid attack of typhus or measles. "Would I were Ulla and could lay her lame with some awful incantation!" he thought with grim mirthfulness.

CHAPTER XXVI.

FROM WINNIE'S DIARY.

"I AM very sad to-day and cannot speak of it to anybody. So I will open my old book and confide my troubles to it. Perhaps I shall feel better if I do. Possibly I exag-

gerate, too. They often tell me I am apt to exaggerate. Here I am in the old room which I used to occupy in my childish days. It is the only one that has remained unchanged. One would not recognize the rest of the house, it is so brilliant. Of course they did not wish for reminiscences. There is but one they cannot remove—the sound of the hammering in the mines. All my youth comes back to me as it strikes my ear ; and I see my mother. For the first time in my life a longing after my mother steals over me. My father had not seen me for years ; he stood speechless before me, and at length he whispered, with trembling lips, ‘Edleen!’ So I must be like her. But I will not suffer as she has suffered. I will always tell my Morgan everything, for her whole misery commenced with not telling things. And yet, one cannot always be straightforward. I cannot tell him, after all, how he bore himself when Kathleen, my step-mother I mean, alighted from the carriage.

“Ah me, how beautiful she is ! She has never been so beautiful—and so splendidly dressed. My father must have grown very wealthy. But he looks so old and gray, and not in the least happy. Kathleen glanced at me with her old look—the look with which she used to pull me away from the piano. But why, *now*—what harm have I done her ? And when she gave Morgan her hand, he bowed low, and when he straightened himself again, he was pale to his lips, and his dear eyes looked gloomy, just as gloomy as they did long ago, when he was in such distress about something he will not disclose to me even now. But I fear I have guessed it, and I feel a hot pain in my heart and chest, as if they were on fire. No doubt it is quite foolish, and I am almost ashamed of writing it, but when I saw my Morgan so pale, my old hatred of Kathleen seemed to revive.

"Dear Lord, help me to overcome it. I will be calm, and good, and grateful, very grateful for the happiness of possessing Morgan, who has been dear to me ever since I can think. Of course I cannot claim to be the only one he ever cared for. He was a young man when I was still a little girl; but that is not really so long ago, it only seems so to me, because I was growing from year to year. Dear Lord! my heart is very heavy, and I cannot speak to Morgan of this. It would look as if I did not trust him. Besides, she is a married woman now, and my step-mother, so I ought to have no cause of apprehension. And yet I feel so troubled. What am I to do to hide my feelings from Morgan? Martyn grew uneasy when he saw Morgan so strongly moved, and spoke softly to him; and then Morgan flushed crimson, and the veins in his forehead swelled. I pretended to be looking at Kathleen lest he should think himself observed. It was impossible, too, not to look at Kathleen, she was so lovely. I am dreadfully ashamed of myself, but I go to my mirror very often since then. I have never done that before. She was as lithe as a cat. Ah, and those hateful blue eyes of hers, with their cutting expression hidden under her lashes. I wonder whether she still lays a pencil on her lashes to make people see how long they are. Her skin is like ivory; her black hair is long and dense, and her figure extremely delicate and pretty. I feel quite clumsy beside her. But she is married after all, and must be happy with my good, good father. Only, she is always up in her fine apartments, and my father stays in his study, and so they are rarely together. Why did he marry her, I wonder? My Morgan will bear me company, and when he works, I shall sit by him as quiet as a mouse, and his study shall become what my father Gwynne's has been, a place of refuge and resort to all the household. I will not live alone like Kathleen.

"They did not speak very affectionately to each other either. Why *did* they marry? This morning she told him something disagreeable about Minnie, and yesterday about me—already! But my father paid no attention to her. And that made her look furious! I heard my kind step-mother say, 'To be sure, she is very beautiful.' And my father made no reply. Mamma's picture stands on his writing-table, and a life-size oil-painting of her hangs over his bed, and he took another portrait of hers in a silver frame from his traveling bag and placed it on the table by his bed. If that is the case, I begin to tremble for Morgan again. He did not come near me while my step-mother was present, just as if he had been afraid. Afraid of what, I wonder? Martyn drew him into conversation and placed himself so that Morgan was forced to turn his back to her. But Morgan was quite absent and never heard what Martyn said to him. My heart beat so fast that I could not help sighing. At that Robert quickly turned to me and asked whether I didn't think my step-mother more hateful than ever. That comforted me a little. And he laughed at her all the time, and declared she did not please him at all. In the south there were thousands of such women, he said; they had no charm for him; they were as cold and smooth as snakes; he knew them well. And when I looked toward her and Morgan again and again, he said: 'You know we think it right to cry over our household graves, Winnie, but the warm sunshine and flowers make us gay again a minute after.'

"'Graves do not speak,' said I.

"So that was the cause of Morgan's despair in those old days. But why? Why did he not marry her, if he was fond of her? What was there to prevent him? I wonder whether she cared for him?

"She gave him such strange looks; I have never seen any

one look like that. I could not describe it either. I should not know how. I tried to imitate it before my glass, but to no purpose. One cannot look at one's self in such a way, nor could I look so at my Morgan. I should die with shame. And what would he think of me?

"And my father told him he should spend his days with us, and my step-mother said, there would always be a seat ready for him at our table. But he only stayed for a quarter of an hour, my Morgan. Only a quarter of an hour! I feel quite choked since then. And when I asked: 'You are going already, and leaving me alone?' he replied that his mother wanted him, and Gladys had invited him so pressing, and Martyn wished, I know not what — so many excuses, that I said quite coldly: 'Ah, indeed?' and let him go. If my Odysseus is afraid of sirens, I will certainly not lure him to where they dwell. I had rather he kept away. But his siren is fettered after all. There is evidently something here which I do not understand. My head feels dizzy with it. There is a secret somewhere, and I do not know how to lift the veil.

"I used to fancy I could tell him everything I had thought and felt through all these years, however unruly it had been. And now I have suddenly grown taciturn. What should I say to him? I am so ashamed. How am I to call the feeling which possesses me? For it is something worse than my old childish hatred, fierce as that was. I am also afraid of her; she looks so grand in her fine clothes, as if she ruled everything—except my father. He is icy cold to her, icy. *She* is strangely respectful to him; and yet, when she said: 'I want another summer gown and a riding-habit, Vaughan,' he replied, 'Why not order it then?' It did not use to be so with us in the old days. There *must* be a secret, and I shall not rest until I have found

it out. Why did Morgan not marry her? And why did my father? He is not the least fond of her.

"It was hard to get into the carriage and drive over here. I felt as if they were tearing my heart to shreds, because it clung to the vicarage while they took me away from it. My whole happiness seemed to fall to pieces. But I did not cry; firstly, because I would not hurt my father; and secondly, because I would not show any weakness in my step-mother's presence; I should be lost if I did. When she bade Morgan good-by, he turned pale again and never looked at me. So I was robbed of his last glance. And her face wore such an ugly expression of triumph. I should have liked to strike her.

"Minnie is a very silly child still. She puts such stupid questions—'Why did I not embrace Morgan a last time?' and the like. How could I embrace him when he did not look at me and only heard the siren's sweet good-by? Why did he not marry her? Robert pressed my hand till it ached, saying, 'Keep up your courage, things are sure to come wrong!' so that I could not help smiling. As we drove away I saw him put his arm in his brother's and walk down the park with him.

"On the road a strange thing happened; when the carriage stopped before our park gate, the poor mad laundress suddenly came up to it and threatened my step-mother with her fist—'Tom,' she said, and was gone again. My father was looking out of the opposite window, and Kathleen had turned as white as a sheet. When she could speak, she said it was incomprehensible that lunatics were left at large. But that poor thing is so harmless; she washes and sings very sweetly, and does not seem to grow older or to lose her beauty. But what did that mean? We were told our brother Tom was dead. There was something between

Tom and Kathleen, but I don't recollect very clearly. They were engaged or something like it, I fancy. I can't remember. There is another secret. Those things were never spoken of in our hearing; that is how I came to forget so much. But they said my mother's death was caused by Tom's. I see that I am walking blindfold, and I am frightened, dreadfully frightened, and long so much for Morgan, and Missy, and my own mother too. Strange! I never longed for mamma till to-day. I feel out of place here, and yet it is my father's house. Whenever he looks at me, his eyes fill with tears, and when I go to the piano, he leaves the room; so too, when I play on the harp, even if he has asked me to sing a moment before. I must be very like my mother. Kathleen said so too, in no very friendly tone. But when has her tone ever been friendly? Minnie asked me why she had turned so pale at the park gate. 'I know as much about it as you do,' I told her. She thought a long time, but she could not make it out; nor could I.

"I wrote all this yesterday. To-day I am much sadder still. Morgan did not stay above twenty minutes, and my step-mother did not quit us an instant; she said afterward, she did not think it fit that plighted lovers should meet alone. Why not? I have always been alone with Morgan, in the park, and in the drawing-room; one day he even came up to my little room, and thought it so pretty. And there she sat talking to him all the time, and I sat and looked on. And Morgan was so changed—uneasy, and cold, and reserved. I looked out across the sea, which seemed as angry and impatient as my heart. She talked to him about the art of preaching, and then about art in general, very much in general too, for she knows nothing about it, though she has been to the Louvre. I know the pictures in it better than she does, much better. But I was silent. There is not a

single picture here, and at the vicarage all the walls are covered with photographs and engravings from great masters ; and what treasures my dear father Gwynne's library contains—how I used to delight in them !

“ There is but one room here which Kathleen never enters : my father's study. I had taken refuge there to-day, because she wanted to look over my wardrobe. I know what that means, and shiver at the very idea. For she understands about that, and I don't. And so I had found a beautiful book about mines, with drawings, in the study, and taken it to the window where the curtains hid me from view. Then I heard the door open, and my father said : ‘ Come in here, Lewes, we shall not be disturbed here. So Owen sends you ? ’

“ ‘ He cannot leave his bed to-day, poor man ; he is not at all well.’

“ Yes, that was Lewes's voice. I knew it immediately, though I had not seen him for many years. I fancy there was some talk about his being in prison at one time, but that could hardly have been. For my father spoke very kindly to him. And my father is so severe. I am sure he would not keep any one in his service who had been in prison.

“ ‘ You've made a splendid stroke of business again, Lewes,’ said my father. ‘ You are a genius, and I shall not rest till you accept a higher position. It is not fit you should sit among the clerks, when you might fill the highest places, and quite shame me with your boldness and unerring judgment.’

“ ‘ Leave me where I am. I will not rise. I will not be weighed to the ground with your generosity. I have some self-respect left, Mr. Vaughan. If I can serve you, let it go toward paying an old debt, which I shall never be able to completely, though I should live a hundred years.’

“ ‘ You have doubled my fortune, Lewes.’

“ ‘ If I have, so much the better for you. It makes no difference in my feelings. I am as much a criminal in my own estimation as I was before, and my voluntary atonement does not procure me any peace of mind.’

“ ‘ Lewes, Lewes ! Perhaps I was the greater sinner of the two ! ’

“ Then I felt as if it would be wrong for me to hear more, and I coughed a little. My father came to the window and pushed the curtain aside, with a very severe countenance. I looked up at him very much frightened and sorry, and stammered :

“ ‘ Forgive me ! ’

“ Then I heard a heavy groan, and saw Lewes sink back in his chair white and faint. My father approached him while I held some water to his lips, and stood looking at him so searchingly, gloomily, severely, as if he thought him his greatest enemy. It was all a mystery to me again, and I grew more nervous every minute.

“ At last Lewes spoke : ‘ Pray, my kind master, do not frighten the child, pray do not ! Do you not see that look in her face ? ’

“ But my father answered never a word, and did not take his eyes off him.

“ ‘ Pardon me,’ Lewes began once more, ‘ but did not the resemblance strike you, too, when she looked so timid and frightened just now ? ’

“ ‘ It did, very strongly,’ said my father, in a deep voice.

“ I stood chafing my hands because they were so cold ; I felt afraid of them both. How mysterious everything is in this house. I never knew what a secret was like before. What crime did my father speak of ? He cannot have ac-

quired his fortune in an unfair way? If he had, I would beg Morgan to marry me poor. But no, my father has always been an honest man. Shall I ask Morgan what it all means? He does not know either. I know whom I shall ask—Llewellyn. He knows everything, being a minstrel. A minstrel is like the sea; the sea buries everything in its depths, and throws it upon the shore again after years; and then secrets are solved and treasures found, and poor lost people decently buried. Yes, I will ask Llewellyn. I have long found out that he knows everything. For, when I came here, he said—‘Be very brave, child, and bear this short time of probation in heroic fashion. You will not succumb. I cannot come to you, because I should not be a welcome visitor over there.’ I really saw Kathleen change color when she greeted him; and she did not address him, but turned at once to Missy—Kathleen to turn to Missy! So there I stood between the two men, who evidently suppressed some terrible words. For their lips were tremulous. My father looked as if he would fain have learned something—asked a question, wrested a confession from his companion; and Lewes looked as if he were standing before judge and jury, awaiting their verdict of ‘guilty.’ I may be mistaken. But it seemed so to me. Can one fight spiders’ webs in heroic fashion? There are spiders’ webs before my eyes, turn where I will; and how am I to fight them? They grow denser every hour.

“Lwes’s lips were quite blue, and he closed his eyes; I really thought he would die, especially as he put his hand to his heart several times, just as my dear father Gwynne used to do.

“‘Don’t die, Lewes,’ I whispered to him. ‘My father is so fond of you, you know, and can’t do without you.’

“At that the poor man smiled faintly, opened his eyes

and looked at me with such a dreadfully sad expression in them that I dreamt of it all the night.

“‘I shall not die just yet,’ he murmured, ‘but soon, soon! I *am* so weary!’ And then he closed his eyes again. I ran out and got him a little sherry, and rubbed his temples with some strong essence from my father’s toilet table. My father walked up and down the room, with his hands on his back. Presently he stopped before my mother’s picture, and gazed at it with the same look that he had fixed on Lewes. But Lewes did not see it, for he was looking at me, watching my every movement. How he must have loved my mother. Ah, good Heavens! No, no! He did not love her as—no, ah, no! And yet my father looked at him in the same way as I did at Kathleen yesterday. O God, send me those spiders’ webs again and make them dense before my eyes. I will not know anything, I will not! For may be I should die if I knew.

“I will sing and forget. Come, sweet harp, we will sing together. Llewellyn suggested a fine thought to me; let me put it into words:

“ The pallid lady passes
Before her vassals bold,
Upon her bosom sparkles
A chain of massive gold.

“ It lies in heavy meshes
Her slender form around,
It loads her arms and shoulders,
It weighs her to the ground.

“ ‘ Now tell us, noble lady,
Why toil you thus in vain?
Why wear your golden fetters?
What means this cruel chain?

" ' Is it a lover's fancy,
To bind your faith withal ?
Or has a tyrant linked it,
To keep your heart in thrall ?

" ' But let our sturdy shoulders
Relieve you of this pain !
Permit your boldest hero
To break the fatal chain ! '

" ' Alas, my faithful vassals,
This chain no hand may break,
No hero free me from it,
Or wear it for my sake.

" ' My guilt has forged these fetters,
My penance thus I pay.
Until my sin and weakness
And sorrow pass away.

" ' Until my moans be silenced,
Until my tears be dried,
Until the heart find comfort,
That was so sorely tried.

" ' And then, my faithful vassals,
This hour I will recall,
And for your noble pity
I'll bless you one and all.' !

" I am not sure whether that will do. The word *chain* comes too often, and it is not easy to avoid its repetition. I will show it to Llewellyn. He will correct it for me. Ah, if I were a poet like Llewellyn, I should be as gay as he ! Why did he make me a present of that pretty theme ? But it suits me well ; that chain is like a heavy secret which weighs one to the ground. Perhaps the poor lady did not even know whose sin she was expiating. May be it was not at all her own, but some one else's. Must one suffer for

another's sin, I wonder? And what is sin? What crime were my father and Lewes speaking of?"

"To-day we took a long ride—Morgan, Robert, Kathleen, Minnie, and I. It might have been very pleasant, but she was always in the way. Robert whistled softly, and said, would we gallop a little? When we had got out of earshot he asked whether my step-mother always guarded me so closely. And I complained just a little. He frowned and whistled a tune, a strange, southlandish air. The path grew narrow, and we had to ride in single file. He went on whistling that strange song, and sang it too. He picked it up in Hayti, I think he said; it sets one thinking of forests, and tropical flowers, and seaside solitude. I don't know whether it was my state of mind, or the air, or the sea, but everything seemed so different to what it used to be. I saw Lewes's face before me again, and I felt sure of there being a secret. I looked round—Kathleen glanced at me so very angrily—and Morgan, my Morgan, was staring at Kathleen, with *such* eyes!

"Oh, it was like a dagger thrust into my breast. I was accustomed to look into his eyes as one looks in at an open church door; but they were not saintly—they were hungry now. Morgan, Morgan! I busied myself with my glove; for I would not cry before her. What am I to do? Robert sang and sang. Minnie thought of nothing but her horse, and did not notice anything, thank God. But I remarked that Robert always proposed the narrowest and steepest paths, where one could only ride in single file. He is good, Robert is very good, but he cannot help me.

"I am very young, after all, to fight with such unfamiliar things. Perhaps if I knew—and not to be able to ask my Morgan! I long to say to him: 'That woman has made you wretched before now. And she is so false, so false,'

I would warn him against her. Perhaps he is too really good and innocent to know that any one can be so false. To-morrow he is to preach in the curate's stead from the pulpit whence our dear father used to preach. How my heart will beat. When we returned, Lizzie and Daisy were waiting to see us, and I suddenly felt as if I had grown a stranger in their home, coming from another country, or having been absent for years. And it is only a few days since I left them. Ah me, what shall I do? If Kathleen were a girl and free herself, I should know exactly where my duty lay. And my dear father Gwynne always said: 'One must do one's duty though one's heart should break.' But things being as they are? Kathleen is my step-mother. Is it possible that one should be one man's wife and love another? No, no, it cannot be, it must not be. 'Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife.' How often I have read that, and I never understood its meaning before to-day. Morgan, my hero, my idol, my darling, am I nothing to you? Can I do nothing to protect you? She does not really love you; she plays with you like a cat, because she wants to vex me. Morgan, you will not suffer your dear heart to be caught in such a snare. Why, it would be sinful, Morgan. Ah, would I were somebody else, a friend, a brother, that I might warn him without incurring a charge of selfishness!

"I am more perplexed than ever. Of my Morgan's beautiful sermon, to which I looked forward with such pleasure, I have not heard a syllable. Everybody was touched to tears. 'So like his father!' they said. His beloved mother clasped him to her heart with tears of joy. Missy had had herself carried to church, and her dear eyes were also streaming over; my father was deeply moved, I could see that. Kathleen was very pale; Robert walked away to our household graves by himself; Ned said, 'my

'brother seems to be quite an orator.' And I alone have not heard a word of what he said. All because of something that happened this morning ! This morning my father gave me a key and said, ' Child, you may go up to the room which is never opened ; there you will find your mother's hymn-book. You may have it.' I thanked him, kissing his forehead, and went upstairs. I felt very solemn as I entered the room. I immediately recognized its odor, after all these years. How strange ! There stood her writing-table. As I looked at that table, I remembered how I had once seen her cry as she sat at it with an account-book before her. Yes, I fancied I saw her still. Only, the writing-table stood downstairs, I believe. There stood her harp too, carefully wrapped up. And a few things were lying about still. On the bed a shawl of hers, and on the stand beside it her hymn-book. I wondered whether I should not find some message to one of us in it, which she might have written before her death ; so I opened it. I found different things between the leaves ; a letter from Tom, promising to reform if she would only help him just this once ; dried flowers ; a song ; and then paper came to view, which had evidently been written with a weak, trembling hand. I will copy it out ; perhaps I shall understand it better then. At first I did not even know from whom it was, as I had never seen my mother's handwriting. Nor did I know for whom it had been meant. My heart beat fast for a moment at the thought that it might be addressed to me, and I sat down close to the drawn curtains to read it undisturbed. But I saw very soon, that it was not to me :

" . . . Before I am laid in my grave, whence my love cannot reach you any more, I wish to send you, my child, a last farewell. What can I say but—Forgive me ! Forgive me, my child, for having been so bad, so foolish, so weak a

mother to you ! for not having been, as I ought to have been, a firm support and stay to you ! Before the Highest Judge I accuse myself and acknowledge my guilt. And if I could clear you by this confession, I would do the same before your human judges. But you are out of my reach, far away from my love, from my devotion and my aid ; and I, who used to help you at any cost, am dying and powerless to save you from a shameful death, or a still more shameful pardon. When they took my son away to prison, my heart was broken. Oh, why did you not shoot yourself dead as you intended ? It would have killed me at once. Now, I must live and suffer on, and can only beg and pray them to spare the life of my son. But what a life it will be—Tom, Tom, darling of my soul, object of my tears and prayers—I have known but one passion on earth, my culpable love for you ! Forgive me, my son, for having loved you so ill and perniciously ! I suffered a good and unselfish man to ruin himself in abetting my sinful maternal love, and finally to be charged with theft. I never asked him where he found you money, after all my jewelry was gone. He sacrificed everything—his fortune, his good name—and I had not courage to say that he had done it for the honor of the family. He still pines in prison because I will not speak. Tom, Tom ! What have we done ? I must have planted that cowardice in your soul, which led you into crime. Forgive me, my child ! And should they lead you to death, remember that I shall go with you in spirit, and pour my heart's blood on your way, and receive your last sigh. And if their cruel mercy shall condemn you to penal servitude and transportation, remember that even a convict can win his way back to heaven. Oh, my child, my child ! I dare to hope for your forgiveness ; for I have passed living through every torment of hell, and am tortured to death

even now. There are many times when my mental sufferings make me insensible to my bodily pain. I am responsible to God for what I have made of you; for you were intrusted to my keeping. Ah, is my love, my despair, powerless to deliver you? Must I go out of this life with the consciousness that we two ought never to have entered your step-father's house, to which we brought nothing but shame? And he prized his honest name beyond every other thing! Tom, Tom! why have I loved you so fondly, so wickedly, so unboundedly? Will this immense love of mine plead for me before the throne of God, and deliver you? Your soul, I mean! For it is better you should not be on this earth any more, from which I must now depart. I have pined to the grave because of you, my son; it is all my fault, my own terrible fault; but as I have forgiven you a hundred thousand times for all you ever sinned against me, so will God, being our Father, also—'

"Here the writing grows illegible, and soon breaks off. That was my morning service. At church I sat looking from face to face, and thinking: 'So all these people know that my brother is or was a criminal, that he died or lives dishonored. Perhaps he, my own brother, was led to death at Cardigan. And they all know it.'

"Stay, I can make out a few more words here:

"'. . . . The terrible curse Kathleen hurled at you when you were being arrested, will fall back upon her own head; it will be obliterated in the view of heaven by my tears.'

"A terrible curse from Kathleen? Why did she curse Tom, when he was already in the hands of the law?

"No wonder I was deaf to all at church. I looked round several times, fancying the sea must be rushing in at the church door, there was such a noise in my ears. I

don't remember how I got there at all. It has completely vanished from my memory. I sat thinking everybody must see it in my face that my brother was a criminal and my mother died of a broken heart, and that an honest man was sent to prison on our account. But nobody seemed to think of those monstrous facts.

"And there sat Kathleen, who had cursed Tom. She used to kiss him at one time, and poor Temorah cried 'Tom' to her. What did *that* mean? Ah me, the sea is roaring still, or may be the miners are so noisy. I feel as if I were deaf, and now and again a mist swims before my eyes. With whom might I speak—whom could I ask? It would be the most natural thing to turn to Morgan—but, after church, he did not so much as lift his eyes from the daisies in the grass when I talked to him, he was so indifferent; and nobody else looked at me. They were all thinking of themselves, of the sermon, of Morgan, of Kathleen's fine dress. It rustled so, that dress. I hate Kathleen's dresses. They are so noisy.

"My brother was a criminal. And nobody has been unkind to me on that account. Morgan was even willing to marry me in spite of it. But, perhaps he ought to be warned. Can anybody marry a sister of Tom's?

"To-day I have at last spoken to some one, and that was Robert. He *did* see, after all, that I was ill at ease; he saw it also at church. So I showed him the letter, and asked him whether things had really happened like that, and what was the meaning of the things I do not yet understand. He said my brother was living; but such a life! And he laughed at my thinking that I ought not to marry. People are still speaking of Morgan's sermon. But he always casts down his eyes, when they say anything to him on that subject. I know why; I hinted slightly at it to

Robert, only quite slightly, and he nodded and again sang his Hayti song. But the story about Tom, and Kathleen, and Morgan he would not tell me after all. I said: 'Is not Kathleen a cat?'

"'Oh, yes,' he said, 'and something else to boot. I'd like to give her a lesson that would last her for the rest of her life.'

"'How would you manage that, Robert?'

"'Deary, those are things you don't understand.'

"'Ah, Robert, there are so many things that I don't understand.' And then I told him about that scene in my father's study, and when the flood-gates had been opened so far, there was no shutting them up again. I began to cry bitterly, and asked him whether I ought to release my Morgan from his engagement, and not to think of him any more, even if it broke my heart. Thereupon he took both my hands in his, and said:

"'It lies with you to save Morgan from that woman. This is not a case for shy retreat, but for calm persistence in what is right, and honest, and natural. He will forget the sirens, never fear. You just tie him to the mast, and I'll steer, and if we don't get away from those sirens in good time, I'll sail round the world in the uppermost scuttle, and feed on bread and water all the way. You trust me, and do what I tell you; and watch me at work. Sirens do *me* no harm; I'll settle their business for them in no time. Morgan is perfectly well aware of her fish tail, and knows very well why she has cursed Tom. You ask him once, and see what he'll do.'

"'Ah, but I can't do that.'

"'Really? You can't? Do you want to be like your poor mother, and have secrets from your husband? You just show him that letter, and tell him everything.'

“ ‘When?’

“ ‘When? Why, don't you ever see him alone?’

“ ‘Never.’

“ ‘Then ask about Tom before Kathleen ; but remember that you're handling dynamite when you do, and choose your time.’

“ Robert is good, and I love him dearly ; and I am so glad to have brothers like him and Ned ; if I could only forget Tom.

“ I have followed Robert's advice ; Robert was present at the time. We were sitting on the terrace, we four. I had sent Minnie home to pay Daisy a visit, and Robert was excessively amiable to my step-mother. Suddenly I said quite aloud to Kathleen : ‘Tell me, why did you curse Tom when he was being arrested?’

“ I had known it to be a dangerous topic, but I had not expected such an effect after all. They started dreadfully. Kathleen turned deadly pale. Morgan ran away to the river. Kathleen hissed : ‘You lie!’ and was gone. Robert had put his hands in his pockets and took no notice, looking at the sea and whistling. There we two sat and did not stir.

“ ‘Well,’ said Robert, ‘why don't you run after your Morgan as fast as you can? Come, look sharp!’

“ So I ran down the slope. I found Morgan sitting on the rocky bank and letting the water run over his shoes ; the rushing of the current drowned the sound of my footsteps. I slipped behind him and put my arms round his neck ; he started so violently that I thought he would fall into the water.

“ ‘O Morgan!’ I cried.

“ ‘Ah, it is you—thank God!’ said he, and drew me to his breast, holdly me very tightly and crying like a child upon my neck. I quite caught my breath with terror.

“‘Ah, what have I done?’ I said at length.

“‘What angels, heavenly messengers do,’ he replied. ‘They stand in our way and beckon, and lead the straying back to the right path.’

“‘Morgan, please don’t cry like that,’ said I. ‘What am I to do if you cry like that? You see I am very stupid and foolish, and find myself surrounded with riddles and secrets. And I have found this letter and seen Lewes, and I could not tell you because we are never alone now. Morgan, you will not leave me in the dark, will you? Up to yesterday I thought Tom had died; now I know the truth, and I fear I ought to release you from your promise, Morgan, because my brother is a criminal. I really thought I could not bear it. And I have not heard a single word of your sermon.’

“‘So much the better!’ he murmured, as he read.

“At first he could not make out the last sentence either; so I read it to him, and the paper trembled in his hand.

“‘Pray, pray, Morgan—tell me why she cursed him?’

“‘I cannot tell you, child; it would make the old wounds smart afresh. But when you are my wife, I will tell you.’

“‘Morgan, why did you not marry Kathleen?’

“‘Because of Tom.’

“‘Because of Tom! Had you seen him kiss her?’

“‘Yes, almost.’

“‘That was not fit, was it? But Kathleen need not have permitted it, need she?’

“‘Of course not.’

“‘But yesterday she was on the point of kissing *you*.’

“‘Me? When?’

“‘She thought at first that I was not present, but I was, and she hated me for it. Morgan, you will not kiss her, will you? For you see, *I* could never kiss you again if you did, never!’

"The world wears a very different aspect now. Morgan has never once come alone since that day ; that is why I have no time for writing. Robert always comes with him, and courts Kathleen as if he were crazy. And she is reserved with Morgan and avoids him. She is listening all the time to Robert's gay talk. I really think she will fall in love with him. How *can* one fall in love with Robert? But thank God ! let her ! I am not her keeper, and Robert winked his eye so merrily at me yesterday. And he told her such things about her beauty that I got quite hot and ran off to pick a few flowers. Such a rascal as he is. But I do love him ! He has restored my Morgan to me ! He was so tender with her afterward, so gentle and soft-spoken and made such eyes at her. She cried at first, but then she laughed at him. With me she never speaks now. I do not exist for her. How nice ! My Morgan is quite surprised at the change that has come over me within the last fortnight. He says one would not know me again. He has begun to look at me once more, and feels anxious because I have grown so thin. But then I tell him that I am only a reflection of himself, and he smiles so sadly, so sadly, and his dear eyes are darkened.

" 'I am ashamed of myself,' he said yesterday ; but I shut his mouth with my hand.

"There is no talk of any departure yet. And I wish I might go back to the vicarage. I hate to buy my happiness at the cost of Kathleen's flirting before Morgan's eyes, and in such a way ! No ! I often wish I might go with my eyes shut, I'm so ashamed. But horrid Robert goes on playing his part, and darts triumphant glances at me behind her back.

"I have no time for writing ; for we are out in the forest all day. Robert has arranged grand excursions in

which everybody takes part ; even my father, on rare occasions. If he saw Kathleen's behavior, he would not approve of it, I think. Martyn has seen it, and smiled. Morgan is exceedingly grave, and hardly ever goes near her. Llewellyn is not here. I might tell *him* everything. But he has resumed his wanderings. He cannot bear to stay long in one place. Lizzie said to me yesterday :

“ ‘Have you been gone ten years? You look quite old.’

“And Martyn remarked : ‘A little smelting does one no harm ; it makes the metal bright, and removes the dross, doesn't it, little sister?’

“I don't know. I feel neither bright nor free from dross, but full of doubt and care. I only know that I love my Morgan beyond everything, and do not want to see him sad and humiliated, but strong and great. However, Robert has promised to steer past the sirens, and Robert keeps what he promises. I will not say another word about the last days. Much, much later perhaps, when we are old people.

“I talked with Minnie about Odysseus yesterday in Robert's presence, how he had himself tied to the mast in order to get past the sirens in safety. Then he smiled, and said the mast was sure to have been of flesh and blood ; but he looked grave again directly.

“It is strange how one ceases to suffer when one is occupied with somebody one loves better than one's self.

“I said so to Robert, when all at once a heavy weariness, that I had never seen with him before, stole over his face, and he began to sing his Hayti song again. ‘I don't know,’ he said, after a while ; ‘sometimes one suffers even more acutely, I fancy.’

“Perhaps he does not know much about it. Or has he

also got a secret? I begin to think everybody has some secret or other, even Llewellyn; perhaps even Missy. Dear me, Missy! I really never thought about her having also had a life of her own before.

"I have learned to play the Hayti song on the harp, and translated the words pretty faithfully. Morgan is so fond of it. Some time I shall tell him what it means. Perhaps it has another meaning to him.

"The weeks pass and nobody thinks of departing. Morgan will probably be appointed to his father's place. What good fortune! Then we shall be married in spring, when I shall no longer be considered too young. I am not too young now, after all, I have experienced here. But I am not my own mistress. Why will my step-mother not go away? I know the reason. It is not nice and not right of Robert. She is madly in love with him, madly. Wherever he goes, she follows him with her eyes. Whatever he says is charming. Whatever he does is correct. She never looks at Morgan, any more than if he were a tree. O Robert! How I thank you! How happy I am again! I thought I should have died, and so did the others. For Martyn was always coming and auscultating my lungs and heart, because I coughed. But it was only grief. I had not caught any cold at all. It was a kind of choking sensation, with pains in my chest. I felt it quite distinctly. Martyn and Morgan often walked up and down together. No doubt poor Morgan was anxious; for he has been so kind ever since and ignores Kathleen altogether. I think my fortune is safe now, thanks to the good helmsman. I am only surprised at his steady indifference to his siren. He must have a very hard heart. I told him so. Then he laughed a little and gave it as his opinion that there were ways to make a heart passion-proof.

“The Hayti song has the following words :

“Now love is gently stealing
Upon my dreamless rest—
It lay, a dormant feeling,
Unconscious in my breast.

“And though a stormy ocean
To others love may be,
It has but soft emotion
And touching sweets for me.

“But should its hope deceive me,
Its bliss will lure in vain ;
If *one* illusion leave me,
I shall not dream again.

“And so my love is ended,
That was surpassing fair ;
Its fragrance still is blended
With ev’ry breath of air.

“I told Morgan yesterday that I would withdraw my claim, if he did not love me. He flushed crimson and said he hoped I would not disgrace him in such a way. He said only *disgrace*—only that ! Ah, me, how could I ever fancy he loved me ? He is only more grave than ever. Now months have gone by, and Christmas is drawing near.

“My love has no ‘touching sweets’ for him. I laid my hand on his shoulder yesterday, and he made an involuntary movement as if to shake it off. I fear I do not understand him. He is not nice to Robert, and taciturn with everybody. My step-mother intends to set off for Rome as soon as my wedding is over ; she may take me with her unmarried, and let me die there without Morgan. For I must die if I tear myself away from him—but that is of no consequence. Better than make him unhappy.

“Yesterday I was greatly frightened. I went to see our

old Prinnie, who has lost all his teeth and is rather stiff, but knows us still, like a dog. On the way, Temorah suddenly accosts me, asking whether I am Kathleen, and what I have done with her child. Tom's child. Now what does *that* mean? Another mystery? Ah me, I am so tired! I had rather die, I think. I am like a fly in a spider's web, vainly struggling to get free.

"Martyn says Morgan is to get some one to take his place here for a while, and is to take me to the south immediately after our marriage. What good will the south do me, I wonder, if Morgan does not care for me? If only Llewellyn were here! He would tell me how to act. Kathleen is so rude to me. When I open my mouth, she says, 'You lie! do be quiet! you are always lying!' And I cannot bear to see her behavior toward Robert. It is well that my father is away in London most of the time. If she would only go there too, that I might go home to Missy, to my dear mother Gwynne, to my sisters. There I should also please Morgan better than here, where I feel so unhappy. I said to Robert, I was a weak mast, and my ropes would not hold. 'You are mistaken,' he answered; 'take courage and be patient a little longer, and you shall be delivered from her forever.'

"'But Morgan?'

"'What about Morgan?'

"'Will he ever grow to love me, do you think?'

"Robert stamped his foot, and very nearly swore an oath. 'Of course he will! don't you be faint-hearted! and if he should *not*—well, then, sacrifice yourself on the altar of wedlock for his good. For you can't live without him, can you?'

"'Oh no, of course not; I should die; and that would settle the matter.'

“‘Do you think your dying would benefit anybody, would help anybody, would make anybody better or happier? No, you must live and love, and Morgan will thank you on his knees one day.’

“Is it not sad for me that I cannot in the least fancy a life without Morgan? I am like an elder flute that has a soul only when it is stirred by another's breath. And *he* could get on so well without me. Our wedding day draws nearer and nearer, and I am not glad. The other day old Owen was here, and rejoiced at my marrying such an excellent young man. ‘Owen,’ I said to him; ‘please, dear Owen, I want to ask you something. Why was Lewes in prison? No, don't start, please; and don't tell any one about my asking you; but I am ashamed of my ignorance of so many things.’ And I questioned and cross-examined him till I knew all—all about Tom, my mother, and Lewes. Of course I did not speak about Kathleen, as she is the mistress of the house now. But about the others I heard everything. He could not resist me. I am calmer since then. Is that not strange?

“Yesterday Llewellyn came at last. I heard of his arrival and hurried to the vicarage, ran into his room, turned the key upon us and put it in my pocket. Then I flung myself in his arms and cried, and sat down in the easy chair before the chimney and went on crying. Of course my best friend was quite scared. ‘I won't leave this room,’ I told him, ‘until I know all and everything. Who is Temorah, and where is her child, and what is there to tell about Kathleen, and did Morgan love her once? I will not marry deaf and blind and fettered. I will know; I must know! How can I fight against unknown foes?’ And then I sat down on his knee as if I were a little child and assailed him with questions till I knew everything, till I did not even hate

Kathleen any more, and loved my Morgan a thousand times better than before, out of pity. It would have been much better for him, if he had confessed everything to me. Why was he shy and reticent with me, who am to become his wife, after all—his friend and his comfort? Ah, how Llewellyn has cheered me. Why could he not come sooner? He said I should not fear, but love my Morgan with all the strength of my soul. Ah, how good he was—like a saint! He saw that I was thoroughly out of gear, lacking will and reason; and so he set everything to rights again, and assured me it was not at all necessary to be in an ecstasy of delight when one entered upon married life. And—and—I know so well what he said that I need not write it all. I shall remember it well to the end of my days. In the afternoon he took Morgan with him to the old study of my dear father Gwynne. What they spoke there neither of them told me. Nor did I ask.

“‘I have confessed and received absolution,’ was all that Morgan said to me, with a peaceful smile on his dear thin face; ‘I have kissed the old man’s hand because he spoke to me as my father would have done. Now you forgive me too, and let me make you happy if I can. You see I am such a pedantic creature, and things go deeper with me than they do with others. You must have patience with me at times.’

“I patted his dear hand as he held me in his arm, and I nestled against his heart and heard it beat fast and heavily, saying many things that would never pass his lips. I also begged his pardon for having been so jealous. And so all—all was well again. I have begged permission to spend the last days before our wedding at the vicarage. I want my dear mother Gwynne to dress me, her dear hands to fasten my bridal wreath and veil. And then we are really

to travel. Martyn is quite peremptory about it. If he knew that I am happy again now, he would take no notice whatever of my stupid cough. It was only the effect of heartache and fretting.

"Since yesterday I have come here with Minnie. Papa did not refuse his permission. Kathleen was unbearable to the last. But I did not hate her any longer. I always thought of how she had lain in the Green Lake and how Llewellyn had pulled her out. But Robert will not let her off so easily. 'Justice must be done,' he says continually ; 'I mean to punish her in a way she will not forget in a hurry.'

"'But you cannot whip her?'

"'Oh, I can do worse. But that's not in your line. I shall manage it alone.' And there we sat round the dear familiar lamp again, and it seemed to me as if I had been away a hundred years, I felt so old."

CHAPTER XXVII.

JOINED IN WEDLOCK.

PERHAPS it was a welcome discovery to Kathleen that her heart had been roused from its chilly torpor at last and beat with the quick pulse of early youth, and even with dangerous violence, for the fresh young man who had known how to stir it. The vain, coquettish girl had become a brilliant, much-admired woman ; but her heart was empty and her life a dreary waste. Jewels and dresses, traveling and social pleasures could not mitigate the intense weariness which pervaded all her days like drizzling rain, doubly gray and monotonous after the tempestuous times of her first youth.

"If you knew," she told Robert, "what it is to have to be grateful where one despises, you would pity me."

"Why should you despise?"

"I despise a man who suffers the greatest misery to approach his hearth, only because he shrinks from the expense of a few shillings that might avert it. I have witnessed that, step by step."

"I think you wrong Mr. Vaughan. He is far-sighted only in one direction, like an astronomer, and does not see what passes in the dark around him."

"There you are right," laughed Kathleen.

Vaughan had made a mistake when he thought to atone by offering the two whose lives had been ruined at his house a tolerably pleasant existence under his roof. He was not made to understand his fellow-creatures and their feelings. But he bore the grievous consequences of his mistakes with heroic patience, never murmuring or complaining. He had only grown old and gray with them.

His passion for financial combination had survived every other feeling, however, and even grown intenser, if that were possible. In this respect he was still the powerful man whom Robert had justly compared to an astronomer. He was not actuated by any desire to secure his children further wealth; he had no care of that. It was the employment of his strength and genius which gave him pleasure. Happy the man who possesses a talent. Life can never appear fully crushed to him, for when he has lost everything else, his talent remains, claiming his work and interest, regardless of his broken heart, his destroyed existence, and, what is worst of all, his hopelessness. A talented man can even do without hope. For to him everything is fact and reality, and he sees enough in the present to make him independent of the future. The uninitiated

often marvel at his stony indifference in private life, and his redoubled ardor for public activity, from which no personal feeling can any longer divert his attention. Vaughan had risen to a materially higher position in the city, and many envied him his good fortune. No one saw him when he sat brooding for hours before Edleen's picture, reproaching himself, and wrestling with the torturing doubt which he was too proud to solve. Sometimes, at night, he called aloud to her, and when the cry of the sea-gulls answered him at early dawn, he was seized with almost superstitious fear.

He knew that Kathleen had regretted the loss of the jewelry and other trifling property she had sacrificed for her cousin, and he fancied he had fully indemnified her, especially as he had liberally provided for her future in his will. For he had not expected to live long after the sorrow which destroyed his life. He had not taken the talent into account, which retained its hold on active existence and subdued his very misery.

He did not even attempt to interest Kathleen in his work; for he had no wish to begin a new existence. Thus he suffered her to do whatever gave her pleasure, and drew great profit from the luster with which she knew how to surround herself. Her behavior was always faultless, and it could only flatter his pride if she was courted by a swarm of admirers.

In Wales, their continued intercourse with the Gwynnes seemed so natural that he had no suspicion of the warfare which was daily carried on under his eyes, and never noticed that Robert had gradually won his way into Kathleen's heart. He had, indeed, never thought about her heart at all. He believed it to be as dead as his own, and exhorted her to prudence and caution with a view to a later good

match. The idea that he might perhaps survive her, never occurred to him. And yet it is no new thing for a husband to survive a wife whose father he might have been.

Kathleen had only wanted to revenge herself on Winnie and Morgan for their contempt of her. Besides, the emptiness of her own life could not brook such happiness in another's.

But when Robert began to pay her attention, she noticed for the first time that he really was much more handsome and interesting than Morgan, whom she had always thought tedious. It also gave her pleasure to torment the latter in a new fashion, by flirting with his brother before his very eyes. But when one plays with fire, one is as likely as not to burn one's fingers, and she soon found out that Robert had become indispensable to her happiness. He was to her as a fresh spring whose ripple recreated her; he could tell endless stories of his adventures and experiences, and he was so well built and elastic that she was continually watching his movements, whether she would or not.

The sweetness of growing passion was doubly delightful after the long, hopeless dullness that had preceded it, after her first pitiful failure, and she abandoned herself recklessly to it, certain of her impunity. Vaughan was almost always in London, and in the seclusion of sea and mountains she felt herself secure and unobserved. Robert saw with daily increasing satisfaction that his game prospered and his snare had not been laid in vain. It was a bitter joy, however. For he was thinking of Winnie all the time, seeing her grow thin and dispirited. He often felt as if he must shake Morgan, as if he must deal him frantic blows to rouse him to a sense of the good fortune which he was blindly treading under his feet. He took care to let him see the progress he himself was making in Kathleen's favor, and hurried on the

wedding as much as it was in his power. At last an early day in spring was fixed for it.

On the eve of the wedding-day there was great merry-making at the vicarage, the young people vying with each other in funny inventions. Freddy made his appearance in the guise of a clown, surpassing himself in agility, wit, and quickness. When good-nights were exchanged at last, Robert offered himself as an escort to Kathleen, who insisted on going home on foot. The whole party accompanied them to the park gate, and the lonely pair heard their laughter ringing through the night as they made their way back to the vicarage.

Martyn and Gladys went in the carriage with Vaughan, who could not walk much, and Kathleen was in no hurry, for she knew that nobody would wait for her, and that Vaughan would not know when she returned. It was during this walk that Robert elicited a full confession of her feelings from her, and the young man really needed all his strength of purpose not to succumb to her passionate loveliness. But he had sworn to avenge Winnie; he could avenge her and secure her happiness forever. Her delicate face hovered before his eyes while Kathleen was casting the glowing fire of her love at his feet. She broke off suddenly, surprised to hear no word of exultation, to feel no answering pressure when she threw herself upon his breast.

"To-morrow," said he, "just before the wedding, I shall wait for you in the crypt of the church, and there I will answer you. Good-evening."

He went his way, and she stood at her garden door motionless with alarm and surprise.

She could not find a moment's sleep that night; she turned restlessly on her couch, or walked about, racking her brain to discover what could have induced Robert to quit

her at the very moment when she had surrendered her heart and her soul to him.

Early next morning she went down to the beach to obliterate the traces of her sleepless night. The sea was heaving angrily, the breeze blew cold, and the sea-gulls screamed above her head like spirits in distress. Never had the sea-gulls' cries seemed so repulsive to her, while the beautiful creatures showed white and gray against the blue sky, like Japanese decorations, or dipped into the frothy waves, and sailed over them with outspread wings and invisible feet. Suddenly she became aware that some one was standing beside her.

"Ah, yes," said Temorah, "that's my baby's voice. Kathleen hears it scream because of the burning flames, but she does not return because she wants to run after Tom. Do you hear how it screams? Do save it! Oh, do save it! Can't you tell me where Kathleen is?" Temorah bent close to her ear, and grasped her arm. "For I want to curse her for burning my child. Yes, I will curse her; she is a witch. I will nail her to my mother's cross. Can't you tell me where she is?"

Kathleen trembled with terror, but she took courage to say: "Kathleen has gone to London; she is not here."

Temorah laughed: "That is not true. I saw her last night with Tom, and she said: 'I love you, Tom. I will marry you, Tom.' Yes, indeed, she said so. And that is why I will nail her on my mother's cross; she may kiss his name on it till her lips grow numb. But first I must finish my washing. Do you hear how my baby screams?"

At last she loosed her iron grasp on Kathleen's arm, and the latter felt as if she must stagger and sink to the ground. But in a little while the breeze revived her. She thought the sea-gulls' cry really sounded like an infant's wailing.

She turned away and slowly walked up to the house, where she would be secure from further intercourse with the mad woman.

At the vicarage all were assembled in Gwynne's study, and Morgan was reading the morning prayer.

Winnie had begged him to do so. He read with that melodious voice of his, which so strongly resembled his father's. As he read, on this his wedding-day, he thought with deep emotion of the thorny path he had trodden, of the heartbreaking hours he had passed in this very room; and when he looked up and encountered Winnie's unfathomable eyes, he promised her in his heart that he would be true to her, and make her as happy as one can be on earth.

"Now, my child, it is time to dress," said Mrs. Gwynne. "But first kneel down here, where father has loved and taught you, and let me bless you in his name."

The solemnity of the occasion had to yield a while to the hubbub of dressing in the bedrooms. Maggie was very awkward to-day; if Lizzie had not lent a helping hand, Mrs. Gwynne would never have got Winnie ready.

Robert was the first to come down, and sauntered slowly toward the church in his pretty seaman's dress. He looked particularly dashing on this morning, with a sparkle in his dark eyes and a strained expression on his features which might have betrayed his secret excitement to any one who had had time to look at him. He was dallying behind the church when the Vaughan carriage drove up; he heard Kathleen ask Vaughan to drive on to the house, as she wished to speak to the gardener and see whether the altar was decorated in the way she had desired. He saw her alight in a dahlia-colored velvet gown, which set off her white skin and black hair to perfection. She had never

been so beautiful, and she knew it. She glided with light steps through the church, down to the crypt, whose moss-grown walls had been cut in the living rock and received their only light from above—a magic ray, which played on the glossy folds of Kathleen's dress and threw distinct shadows on the rocks behind her. Robert gazed at her a while before she knew of his presence; then he sprang down the steps, the light sound of his footfall dying away in the vast place like the dropping of autumn leaves, and suddenly stood before her.

"Here I am," said Kathleen. "But I do not know what for."

"I know," said Robert, looking at her.

"Are time and place not strangely chosen?" she asked.

"Not for what I have to say."

"What have you to say?" she asked, in a tone of vague apprehension.

"I have to tell you that I have never loved you, not for a single hour; that I have loved and shall love but one woman in all my life. That woman is Winnie. I had sworn to protect her from you, and to revenge her upon you. And now, I bid you farewell forever, for my way lies across the sea. And I advise you not to play with men's hearts any more; you know that sorceresses have ever been destroyed by fire. That is what I had to say, Kathleen; and so farewell, and forget if you can."

Just then the ringing of the bells pealed through the church, and Kathleen felt as if the very rock beneath her feet were shaking with the sound.

"Is that all?" she asked in a low voice.

"All. I have nothing else to say."

He vanished as quickly as he had come. But short as the interview had been, Gladys' eldest boy, who had been

running after idolized Uncle Robert, had had time to see him emerge from the crypt, and communicated the interesting fact to his father in Mr. Vaughan's presence. "And," added the little fellow, "I saw a lady in a lovely violet gown standing below like a picture, I did indeed!"

Martyn tried to hush the child. But Vaughan had already walked away. He descended to the crypt with heavy steps. There stood Kathleen, her handkerchief between her teeth, her bloodless hand grasping the mossy rock, as white and still as marble. She looked at Vaughan as he came toward her, but she did not move.

"I thought I had begged you," he began, in an icy tone, "to preserve your dignity and mine as long as I lived. That was the only condition I made. It does not suit me to get into people's mouths here. We shall start for London this afternoon."

He turned and left her. Kathleen had slightly bent her head and stood looking, with an expression of ineffable repugnance about her eyes and lips, after the old man who had a right to speak such words to her. And the bells were ringing all the time. When he was about to mount the steps, Vaughan looked back.

"Well," he said, "are you not coming? Do you mean to stay here during the ceremony and willfully set all idle tongues wagging? I wish you to appear by my side. Don't you hear me, Kathleen?"

As she did not stir, he made a few steps toward her again. But the idea of his fetching her was so intolerable that she shook off her stupor and came slowly forward, much as if one of the pillars that supported the church were moving along. The bells were pealing joyfully, and just as Kathleen entered the church, the bridal train appeared at its wide-open door. Mrs. Gwynne, in her dignified widow's

garb, Llewellyn, tall and snow-crowned like Snowdon itself; the bridegroom, whose sunken eyes told of long and weary mental struggles; Winnie, a living fairy-tale; Gladys, in the full beauty of blooming womanhood, a garland of fresh girlish faces and slender forms clad in white and decked with flowers, Martyn and Robert, Ned and Freddy, the twins with Gladys' children, and farmers and miners from far and near. Kathleen stood like a marble image, and saw the church fill, and saw Martyn's eye fixed searchingly and disapprovingly upon her, and saw Robert, whose pale face was turned toward Winnie, and saw Llewellyn, and thought of the Green Lake.

Why, oh why, had he preserved her life? What had that bygone misery been, compared to the racking, furious pain of this hour, which she was forced to conceal under her velvet and diamonds? A wild idea darted through her head, that she would rush up to Robert and kiss him before all the congregation, or beat her brains out this instant against the nearest pillar. The beautiful singing sent a horror through her limbs, sounding in her ears like the howling of the lost. She thought of the sea-gulls' cries, and of Ulla, and of Temorah's cottage, and that she was nailed to her cross this very hour, as securely as Temorah could have desired.

Ay, Winnie was avenged, cruelly avenged, and the vengeance nearly cost the avenger and the offender their lives.

"Robert," whispered Martyn. "Are you ill?"

"No, why?"

"Don't you want to get away?"

"Yes, please; directly the ceremony is over."

"Very well. Robert, I fear you've been playing with fire."

"Oh, no. I've fought a battle and come off victorious—can't you see that?"

"You, victorious?"

"Oh, yes, but wounded too. I shan't fight many more battles of this kind."

"Father," said Winnie, when she embraced Vaughan after the wedding, "father, Morgan says I am to give you this letter, which I found in my mother's hymn-book; he thinks it will console you and set your heart at rest. But do not open it before you are quite alone with mamma's picture in your own room."

And then the newly wedded pair drove away southward, where Winnie's love was to flourish among orange trees and roses, like some rare flower that blooms but once in a hundred years.

Vaughan and Kathleen left for London, and Kathleen was never seen again in Wales. Robert declared he must go back to sea immediately; the land air made him sicken. Freddy decided to go with him and turn sailor likewise, and Ned had chosen the medical profession. So the Vaughan house stood empty, and the vicarage sank into deep, peaceful stillness, which was but transiently broken by the ringing of the old church-bells, when Missy's faithful heart was borne to eternal rest, and when the fair daughters of the house became blooming and excellent wives.

It was a happy day when, after an absence of a year and half, Morgan and Winnie came home radiant, as if their honeymoon had but just begun.

They had brought heaps of photographs with them, and were extremely interesting narrators to old and young, Winnie presenting all they had seen in the gorgeous coloring of her powerful imagination, Morgan quietly making it accessible to the simplest childish mind.

At Rome, in the Coliseum, they had hardly known one day why the atmosphere suddenly seemed to grow so chill

around them, until they had recognized Kathleen, who fixed a gloomy, ice-cold look upon them as she stood with her hand on Vaughan's arm, the latter appearing younger, stronger, harder, and very impatient to get back to his work.

"Poor Kathleen!" said Llewellyn musingly; but he was roused from his short revery by an unusual sound—a ringing laugh from Morgan. Morgan's face brightened wonderfully whenever Winnie was spoken of, and Winnie looked a little less spiritual. She had grown strong and healthy, and Martyn noted her improved looks with great satisfaction, while Llewellyn declared he could die in peace, now he knew his darling was happy.

As he said this, a deep soft voice was heard singing outside :

"Now give me your kerchief to wash out your tears,
And break you of weeping and sighing;
For though you believed you would die of your grief,
Your grief and the moments are flying.

"Your eyes will be bright, and your heart will be still,
Forgotten its fault and its yearning;
Forgotten the fire and the passionate pain
That once in your bosom were burning.

"Forgotten the curse and the blood on your feet,
That told of your pitiful faring—
Your curse to the winds, and your blood to the soil,
And flowers where you wandered despairing."

Morgan and Winnie exchanged a deep, long look, such a look as sky and sea fix on each other when, after a stormy night, day breaks rosy and radiant, and no one can tell whether the sea has merged into the sky, or the sky into the sea, so completely do they blend in the calm, indefinable luster.

**This book is under no circumstances to be
taken from the Building**

[illegible]



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